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## Report: Pentagon can't track 44K troops

By STEPHEN CARLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military has more than 44,000 troops across the globe that the Pentagon claims it cannot track, according to a recent report.

"We are not at a point where we can give numbers other than those officially stated," said Army Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman.

The report — compiled by the Defense Manpower Data Center under the Office of the Secretary of Defense — shows more than 44,000 personnel in a category labeled "Unknown."

Active-duty military personnel number slightly more than 1.3 million in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, and hundreds of thousands more civilian personnel fall under the Defense Department. That number does not include Reserve and National Guard formations that might be active at any particular time.

The United States has military personnel in nearly every country in the world, ranging from two liaison officers in Fiji to tens of thousands from all of the service branches in Japan and Germany, according to the report.

Manning said during a press briefing Wednesday that troop numbers in Syria are about four times higher than reported by the Pentagon, with 2,000 present in the country. He also clarified that there are 5,200 in Iraq, up from about 5,000 reported earlier.

"We seek to balance informing the American public with the imperative of operational security and denying the enemy any advantage," Manning said at the briefing.

**SEE TROOPS ON PAGE 7**



**Inset: Santa Claus reveals a box of toys near Alzey, Germany, on Wednesday. Santa was unable to jump because of low cloud cover and muddy conditions, so he visited local schoolchildren via cargo truck.**

**A German soldier lands in a field near Alzey. About 100 paratroopers from the U.S., Germany and the Netherlands provided the gifts for local schoolchildren.**

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL B. KELLER  
*Stars and Stripes*

## Special delivery

Santa Claus is grounded, but conditions don't prevent paratroopers from bringing gifts to kids in Germany

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## PACIFIC

# North Korea warns that war is inevitable

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned that war has become “an established fact” as it slashed out Thursday against U.S. bombing drills and recent tough talk by Trump administration officials.

The hard-line rhetoric came as a former American diplomat representing the United Nations met with North Korea's foreign minister in the highest-level U.N. visit to Pyongyang since 2010.

The twin developments underscore the delicate balance in pursuing a diplomatic resolution to the worst crisis to face the Korean Peninsula in decades, even as President Donald Trump's administration and the North trade threats of military action.

The Air Force also sent a supersonic bomber to join state-of-the-art fighter jets Wednesday in a show of force during joint war games with South Korea.

The B-1B Lancer, which used to be nuclear-capable but has been converted to carry conventional weapons, took part in a simulated bombing drill, South Korean officials said.

Fox News reported that two bombers were supposed to be flying together during the sortie, as has been the case in the past. But the second reported a maintenance issue while taxiing to the runway for take-off, an Air Force officer told Fox on condition of anonymity.

Pacific Air Forces did not immediately reply to a request for comment about the report.

The United States also sent F-22 Raptors and F-35s for the first time to join more than 200 other warplanes in the annual exercise known as Vigilant Ace, which ends Friday.

A North Korean Foreign Ministry of-

ficial was quoted as saying the military drills and “bellicose remarks” by U.S. officials “cannot be interpreted in any other way but as a warning to us to be prepared for a war on the Korean Peninsula.”

The reclusive communist state broke more than two months of relative calm last month when it test-fired its most advanced intercontinental ballistic missile into the sea.

It also sent two intermediate-range missiles soaring over Japan and conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test earlier this year, prompting officials to worry it's making faster-than-expected progress toward its goal of developing a nuclear weapon that could reach the U.S. mainland.

National Security adviser H.R. McMaster said over the weekend that the North's pursuit of long-range nuclear capabilities poses the “greatest immediate threat” to the United States.

He said the potential for military conflict is “increasing every day, which means that we're in a race.”

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham made similar statements on Sunday and called for the evacuation of U.S. military families to get them out of “harm's way.” The Pentagon said it has no plans to do so.

CIA Director Mike Pompeo also said Saturday that U.S. intelligence agencies believe North Korean leader Kim Jong Un doesn't have a good idea about how tenuous his situation is domestically and internationally.

North Korea usually issues bellicose statements after what it sees as provocations by the United States. But Trump and senior administration officials have increasingly matched its tone as tensions have risen to the highest level in decades.

“The large-scale nuclear war exercises



KRISTEN HELLER/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

An airman prepares an F-15C Eagle for takeoff at Gwangju Air Base, South Korea.

conducted by the U.S. in succession are creating [a] touch-and-go situation on the Korean Peninsula and [a] series of violent war remarks coming from the U.S. high-level politicians amid such circumstances have made an outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula an established fact,” the state-run Korean Central News Agency quoted an official as saying.

“The remaining question now is: When will the war break out,” the official said.

The official also reiterated North Korea's insistence that its nuclear weapons program is for self-defense, saying, “We do not wish for a war but shall not hide from it.”

“If the U.S. does not want to be burnt to death by the fire it ignites, it would better behave with prudence and caution,” the report said.

The president also has tightened the economic noose on the North with tough new sanctions and a decision to put it back on the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

North Korea has defied those efforts by persisting with its weapons program. But a new opportunity for engagement opened up when it agreed to hold talks this week

with senior U.N. envoy Jeffrey Feltman, a former State Department official.

Feltman met with North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho on Thursday, although no details about their talks were released.

On Wednesday, Feltman met with the vice foreign minister and discussed U.N. assistance and operations in North Korea along with “other matters of mutual concern,” according to North Korea's official media.

China, the North's main ally, also sent its highest-level envoy in two years during a visit last month that was seen as an effort to bolster deteriorating relations between the two countries.

Trump has called on Beijing to do more to rein in the North by cutting off trade and oil supplies.

China opposes North Korea's nuclear program but sees Pyongyang as a buffer against U.S. forces stationed in the South. It also fears a regime collapse would lead to a humanitarian crisis.

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## PACIFIC



PHOTOS BY MARCUS FICHT/Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Justin Hibbard, of the 51st Munitions Squadron, stands in front of his handwork Wednesday at Osan Air Base, South Korea.

## Airmen get bombs from bunker to jet in 'World Series' war games

By MARCUS FICHT  
Stars and Stripes

**OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea** — Rows and rows of earthen bunkers filled to the brim with bombs sit in a small corner at Osan Air Base, the U.S. Air Force's headquarters in South Korea.

The 285 airmen of the 51st Munitions Squadron are tasked with getting them from bunker to jet during annual war games known as Vigilant Ace, weeklong joint Air Force drills that began Monday in South Korea.

"We provide munitions capability to the flight line," said Capt. Daniel Crouch, 51st Munitions' operations officer, calling the exercise the squadron's "World Series."

That means supplying 30 mm rounds to the monstrous guns of A-10 Thunderbolt IIs and filling the Warthogs and F-16s with defensive countermeasures like flares in between exercises, said Crouch, 30, from Richmond, Va.

The airmen also practice building the heavy stuff, everything from laser-guided, 500-pound bombs to hulking, 2,000-pound "bunker busters."

The live bombs built this week won't be dropped — they won't even leave the bomb pads, Crouch said.

Instead, blue inert bombs will be loaded onto the planes. The yellow-tipped live bombs will be torn down at the end of the week and readied to be reassembled for the next exercise. Live munitions are generally dropped only in the U.S. at exercises like Red Flag in Alaska.

At the bomb pads, groups of eight to 10 airmen dressed head to toe in chemical protective gear and combat armor piece together bombs and other munitions assembly-line style, adding fuses



Bombs weighing 2,000 and 500 pounds are displayed Wednesday at Osan Air Base.

and guidance systems.

"We can build these in 10 to 15 minutes," said Staff Sgt. Justin Hibbard, pointing to a row of 500-pound Guided Bomb 54s, which have both GPS and laser-guidance systems. It made its combat debut in Iraq in 2008.

"We can guide this to wherever it needs to go," said Hibbard, 28, of Indianapolis.

Airman Ezequiel Acosta, just six months on the job, said he's already had his hand in the construction of about 200 bombs and is proud of his handwork.

"I build bombs for a living. How many people can say that?" said the Colts Neck, N.J., native.

The squadron's headquarters on this base about 30 miles south of Seoul is decked out for war to make it as realistic as possible.

Massive, maze-like barricades surround the building, protecting it from artillery fire. A specially designed airlock keeps a team of controllers tracking the movement of hundreds of pieces of ord-

nance safe from chemical attack. Racks of M16s sit ready in case of a last stand.

Crouch declined to say how many bombs are produced in a given year, citing operational security. But he said the squadron can outfit jets from other branches, including the Navy's EA-18 Growler, which is at Osan during Vigilante Ace.

They also could outfit South Korean jets with approval from U.S. Forces Korea, he said.

Since it involves a rotational unit with roughly yearlong tours, the exercise includes new people each year, which poses a unique challenge to the Air Force in South Korea. "At a stateside base, a lot of people start to homestead and there's potential for bad habits to set into place," Crouch said. "[In South Korea] because we're always training on the new way to things to do things, we're always on top of our game."

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## Problems spur US to shift aircraft in S. Korea exercise

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

**SEOUL, South Korea** — Bad weather and a temporary runway closure forced the Air Force to move U.S. fighter jets and Warthogs to a South Korean base Thursday during joint war games that have raised tensions with North Korea.

F-16 and A-10 aircraft were being relocated from Osan Air Base to the South Korean base at Gwangju "due to adverse weather conditions," while the F-35s and F-16s were moved to Gwangju due to a runway problem at Kunsan, the 7th Air Force public affairs office said in an email.

The warplanes are participating in the annual military exercise known as Vigilant Ace, but the Air Force said flying operations weren't disrupted by the move.

The runway at Kunsan was closed temporarily after an F-16C assigned to the 8th Fighter Wing "experienced a ground emergency affecting the integrity of its landing gear" while taxiing, Capt. Chris Mesnard, a spokesman for the fighter wing, said separately.

"As a safety precaution the aircraft was stopped immediately to assess the situation and avoid any damage to the aircraft and runway — resulting in the temporary closure of our runway. Once the aircraft was removed, normal flying operations resumed," he said.

Mesnard stressed the incident

"in no way impacted our real-world readiness to launch and execute combat aircraft."

The announcement came after Fox News reported that two B-1B supersonic bombers were supposed to fly over South Korea on Wednesday in a show of force against the North, but only one made the trip after the other reported a maintenance issue while taxiing to the runway.

Pacific Air Forces didn't immediately reply to a request for comment on the report.

In another glitch, an F-22 Raptor had to be towed after landing on the runway at Gwangju, 170 miles south of Seoul, as the drills began on Monday, but the Air Force said an inspection later found no problems with the aircraft.

More than 200 aircraft and 12,000 U.S. personnel, along with South Korean airmen, are participating in the drills, which were scheduled to be held on eight U.S. and South Korean military installations.

Pyeongrang has denounced the exercise as it usually does, warning the joint drills are pushing the two sides to the brink of a nuclear war.

Some 28,500 U.S. servicemembers are based on the divided peninsula as the two Koreas remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

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## DOD picks new leader for Navy forces in S. Korea

By TYLER HLAVAC  
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon has named a new leader to oversee naval forces on the tension-heavy Korean Peninsula.

Capt. Michael Boyle will take charge of Navy Region Korea, Naval Forces Korea and the naval component of United Nations Command, said a Defense Department statement issued this week. The selection was made by Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson.

Boyle — who was selected for appointment to the rank of rear admiral in October — now serves as director for international engagement for the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Before that, he commanded the Japan-based Carrier Air Wing 5, which is the aviation wing of the Navy's 7th Fleet.

The region has seen an uptick

in naval activity in recent months as North Korea conducted a string of ballistic-missile tests — including three intercontinental ballistic missiles — and detonated its sixth and most powerful underground nuclear blast.

Last month, the USS Ronald Reagan strike group conducted a rare tri-carrier exercise with the USS Nimitz and USS Theodore Roosevelt strike groups east of the peninsula. In October, U.S. ships took part in a four-day exercise with the South Korean navy, followed by a port visit by the Ronald Reagan to Busan. The Ohio-class guided-missile submarine USS Michigan also visited the port that month.

The deployment of U.S. bombers, submarines and aircraft carriers to the peninsula always infuriates Pyongyang, which considers them signals of preparations for an invasion.

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## EUROPE

# On the range in Romania

PHOTOS BY MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

A stray dog watches as U.S. soldiers wait for orders on top of their M1A2 Abrams tank during training Wednesday in Smardan, Romania.

## Stray dogs, cold temperatures just part of the experience at live-fire training

By MARTIN EGNASH  
Stars and Stripes

SMARDAN, Romania — Moldavia, which is far removed from the picturesque Romanian mountain monasteries, Transylvanian castles and Black Sea resorts, is a part of Romania few Americans, let alone soldiers, have ever heard of.

But the 142 troops with the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team are getting a close look at the north-eastern region — and its dogs.

The troops are here to train in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, the U.S. effort to defend Eastern Europe and reassure NATO allies in response to a more assertive Russia. Smardan itself is less than 20 miles from the border with the troubled Republic of Moldova, whose breakaway region of Trans-Dniester is under the control of pro-Russia separatists.

When U.S. tank crews are firing on this military range in Moldavia, they are constantly reminded that they're a long way from home. Packs of stray dogs, an all too common sight in Eastern Europe but unusual in the United States, roam the barren training area, looking for scraps and vying for the busy soldiers' attention.

The soldiers training on the base have been told not to pet the wild dogs, regardless of how cute they may look, as some may have fleas or diseases.

"It's pretty tempting to pet them sometimes, but our medics tell us not to," said infantryman Cpl. Joshua Redkey.

The dogs don't seem to interfere in the live-fire training the soldiers are conducting. "They stay out of the way when it's time to fire, so it hasn't been an issue yet," Redkey said.

Some soldiers joke that the dogs



Spc. Brandon Furr, a U.S. Army tanker, warms himself by the M1A2 Abrams tank exhaust during training.

**‘I got my first taste of snow here yesterday. It came out of nowhere and hit me right in the face.’**

**1st Lt. Fidencio Mendez**  
executive officer of Dagger Brigade's  
"Chaos Company"

are here to safeguard the base and protect it from any leftover Meals, Ready to Eat.

"The presence of U.S. forces in Romania, and training with Romanian forces shoulder to shoulder, serves as a demonstration of U.S. commitment to our allies and partners," said Maj. Jonathan Knapton, the public affairs officer for the command element of Atlantic Resolve.



U.S. soldiers move M1A2 Abrams tanks on a live-fire range. The "Dagger Brigade" soldiers plan to wrap up training on Dec. 24.

The "Dagger Brigade" soldiers began their live-fire sequence Dec. 4, and the plan is to finish on Christmas Eve. During that time, they are firing .50-caliber mounted machine guns and 120 mm cannons from their M1A2 Abrams tanks across an eerie, overcast landscape, with dogs of all shapes and sizes shadowing their every move.

One of the biggest challenges

facing the Kansas-based soldiers is the cold weather, which each soldier handles differently.

"I got my first taste of snow here yesterday. It came out of nowhere and hit me right in the face," said 1st Lt. Fidencio Mendez, the executive officer of Dagger Brigade's "Chaos Company."

"It's cold out here, but it's fun," Sgt. 1st Class Anton Kiren said.

time outside of a deployment when we can do our job and shoot our guns."

To pass the time, the soldiers compete for best shot on the range and fastest times to identify targets. Whichever tank gets the highest score earns the title of "top tank" and exercises bragging rights to the rest of the company.

"Getting 'top tank' is very competitive," Kiren said. "Everyone out here does their job great, but when they're done, it's all about camaraderie, and talking ... about how much better you shot than everyone else."

For many soldiers — including Pfc. Christian Alarid, a communications specialist — this rotation to Europe is the first time they've deployed with the Army.

"It's very different than what I'm used to. I haven't spent a lot of time in climates like this, but I like it," Alarid said. "I think it's interesting to be here and learn about Romanian culture and what their Army is like."

He added: "We have a roof over our heads and a bed to sleep in. It could always be worse."

The Americans have been working closely with the Romanians to do everything from shooting on the range to securing supplies.

"The American soldiers and Romanian soldiers have a good relationship," said Romanian Capt. Vatavu Razvan, the base's range control officer.

Razvan believes both nations' soldiers bring different strengths to the alliance. He said American soldiers have the best equipment and are very effective, but the Romanians adapt more quickly to situations.

"It is good to have an ally with the greatest equipment in the world. I just hope that if we ever need them, they aren't too far away," Razvan said.

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## MILITARY

# Lawyer: Aviano airman didn't intend to kill

## Court-martial opens in April stabbing case

By KENT HARRIS  
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — The airman accused of entering a fellow airman's dorm room and repeatedly stabbing her in April was "just interacting with things in his environment" and didn't intend to kill her, his lawyers said Wednesday.

Airman Cameron A. Owens is accused of attempted murder, assault, breaking and entering and three specifications of conduct "being to the prejudice of good order and discipline." His court-martial opened Wednesday after three days of pretrial motions.

Shortly before 4 a.m. on April 11, Owens entered the victim's bedroom after climbing over a wall to reach the common area of her dorm and stabbed her several times, according to the prosecution and the victim's testimony.

Capt. Andrew Paulson, one of two defense attorneys representing Owens, argued that there was no evidence Owens was angry or meant to kill anyone and that the victim's injuries were not life threatening. Without offering a possible motive for Owens' actions, he said the government "overreacted, overreached and overcharged this case."

Paulson and Maj. Jacob Ramer, the other defense attorney, also called into dispute the government charges of breaking and entering by arguing that Owens entered unlocked, open doors.

Many Owens' actions on the outside of the dorms were captured by video cameras, and that's how he was later identified, arrested and charged.

Paulson said he can be seen wandering into several rooms that morning, including one where he took a knife while "just reacting to things in his environment."

Owens later climbed over a "waist-high" wall forming a patio to the common room used by the victim — left open to let in cooler air that night — and then entered her bedroom.

Paulson said Owens stabbed the victim only in response to her movement in a dark dorm room.

The victim later testified that she was sleeping and the first thing she remembers was her comforter being "ripped away" followed by a sharp pain in her head. "I never saw the knife, but I felt it."

Said she was stabbed "at least eight times" and was slow to defend herself from a rapid series of attacks, eventually raising an arm, then sitting up and moving back further onto her bed. "It took me a few seconds to understand what was going on."

The attack stopped, she said, after she screamed. The assailant fled out the patio door and back over the wall, and she ran out the front door and to another airman's dorm.

That airman called for medical assistance, and the victim was eventually treated at the Italian hospital in Pordenone.

Capt. Carly Havens, one of three prosecutors arguing the case, suggested that Owens might have been agitated because of the end of a relationship with a woman in the States as well as

the romantic rejection of an airman he met shortly after arriving at Aviano in March. She seemed to suggest that he was potentially looking for that airman before attacking the victim.

"The government acknowledges that it is difficult to know why someone stabs a complete stranger," she said.

Owens elected to have Air Force Lt. Col. John Harwood hear the case after the military judge decided to allow key evidence and testimony to be admissible Wednesday afternoon.

In pretrial motions that began Monday, the defense had sought to challenge the admissibility of Owens' clothes seized during an Italian Carabinieri search of his dorm room, the alleged knife used to carry out the attacks discovered during following American search, and admissions of guilt that Owens allegedly made to Italian police and later his first sergeant.

The prosecution called three witnesses, including the victim, before the trial adjourned for evening. Dozens of witnesses are expected to take the stand before the trial concludes next week.

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DAN STOUTAMIRE/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. Dwayne Milburn, left, commander and conductor of the U.S. Army Europe band and chorus, leads the band in "Fantasia in G" during a Christmas concert Wednesday at the Kurhaus in Wiesbaden, Germany.

## US Army Europe band carries on Christmas tradition with concert

By DAN STOUTAMIRE  
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Wiesbaden's Kurhaus was filled with the sounds of the season Wednesday night as the U.S. Army Europe band and chorus played more than two hours' worth of classical and modern Christmas favorites for hundreds of attendees.

The neoclassical spa house, completed in 1907, served as the venue for the band's Christmas concert for the sixth year running, a tradition Col. Todd Fish, commander of U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden, is

keen to continue.

"You could not pick a better setting than here at the Kurhaus for the community," Fish said.

The band planned concerts Thursday night in Pforzheim and Friday in Grafenwohr.

The concert began with the more traditional sounds of classical pieces such as Georg Friedrich Handel's "Messiah" and Georges Bizet's "March of the Three Kings" before transitioning to more modern and vocal-oriented songs such as "Winter Wonderland" and "Joyful, Joyful."

The performance was much appreciated by the audience at the concert hall, who gave the band and choir a pair of standing ovations after the final song and an encore.

Fish said the concert is a way for the U.S. military to show gratitude to its host city.

"It's our opportunity to give something back to the city of Wiesbaden and the state of Hessen because they have welcomed us with open arms when we moved here all those years ago," he said.

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## Ex-Vinson commander is latest to face 'Fat Leonard' charges

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — A Navy captain who once commanded a destroyer squadron attached to the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson is the latest to face charges in military court in connection with the long-running "Fat Leonard" scandal.

Capt. John F. Steinberger appeared briefly for an arraignment over video conference Tuesday from San Diego, where he is assigned to the Undersea Warfighting Development Center. He faces charges including conspiracy, violation of a lawful order, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, graft and bribery, according to a charge sheet.

"Fat Leonard" is the nickname for the central figure in the massive corruption scandal that has embroiled the Navy's 7th Fleet. Leonard and Francis is the owner and chief executive of Glenn Defense Marine Asia. Francis pleaded guilty in 2015 to presiding over a conspiracy involving "scores" of Navy officials, tens of millions of dollars in fraud and millions of dollars in bribes and gifts in return for lucrative contracts to provide services to ships in southeast Asia, according to the Justice Department.

According to a charge sheet, Steinberger conspired with Francis from Jan. 22, 2011, through

about April 27, 2012, and accepted gifts of "discounted and free hotel rooms, food, beverages, and services of prostitutes" at or near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Manila, Philippines; Hong Kong; and Perth, Australia, in exchange for providing information about competitors and attempting to influence senior officials in the selection of locations of port visits and the husbanding of Navy vessels to be the best outsized defense contractor.

Steinberger declined to enter a plea Tuesday. He is the fourth naval officer to appear before a military judge in Norfolk in recent months in connection with the scandal after the Justice Department declined to press federal charges.

His appearance came just days after a federal judge in San Diego sentenced Cmdr. Bobby Pitts, of Chesapeake, to 18 months in prison after he pleaded guilty to obstructing an investigation while leading the Navy's Fleet Industrial Supply Command in Singapore. The Associated Press reported Friday.

A trial is scheduled June 7-15. If convicted on all charges, Steinberger could face a maximum sentence of 14 years and six months confinement, dismissal from the Navy, forfeiture of all pay and allowance and a fine.

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## MILITARY

# Jump brings joy to children

Paratroopers earn foreign wings with German toy drop

By WILL MORRIS  
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A group of paratroopers spread holiday cheer to local children Wednesday and won themselves qualification to wear foreign jumping wings when they landed in a field here to deliver Christmas presents.

Santa, the event's main draw, did not qualify for his wings because he couldn't get out of the plane.

About 100 paratroopers conducted a series of static and free-fall jumps this week run by the 5th Quarter Master Theater Aerial Delivery Company, based at Rhine Ordnance Barracks. They came from the Army, Marines and Air Force, along with jumpers from Germany and the Netherlands.

Wednesday's culminating event was a low-level cargo drop of toys, to be followed by a free-fall by Santa Claus from a C-130 in front of a group of screaming, happy German children. If only the jump had gone according to plan.

The drop time was pushed back an hour because of bad weather. When the planes finally arrived and two crates popped over the drop zone, a group of about 70



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL B. KELLER/Stars and Stripes

U.S. paratroopers help a German soldier in a landing zone Wednesday near Alzey, Germany, during a low-level cargo drop of toys.

fourth-graders from a public school in Flornborn began running down a road to intercept the crates, briefly delaying the jump.

Once the children were cleared from the drop zone, two Air Force C-130s and a German C-160 began making passes over the field. Chute after chute opened, but the man in red was nowhere in sight.

Santa couldn't safely make a free-fall jump because the cloud base was too low. If he had done a static-line jump, as had everyone else, he would have likely landed in a pile of mud. Instead, he made a delayed appearance in the back of a cargo truck.

The paratroopers contributed the gifts themselves and handed out the presents to the group of children, some American, some German. One soldier said the event was "awesome." The girl who got his gift was crying because it was so cold.

The U.S. jumpers from this week's training activity will qualify to wear foreign jump wings, a coveted distinction among paratroopers. The wings are awarded for jumping under direction of a



U.S. Army Sgt. Katelyn Garrett, a parachute rigger from the 5th Quartermaster Theater Aerial Delivery Company, hands out toys to local children who watched the jump Wednesday.

foreign jumpmaster, for jumping from the plane of another country or for using a foreign parachute.

Part of the payoff in the training, paratroopers said, was comparing notes and jump techniques.

"It's really great because it

helps get everybody on the same page," said Staff Sgt. Brent Gogin, of 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment.

First Lt. Kelly Washington, of the 5th QMTADC, said jumping out of a German plane was differ-

ent than it is from a U.S. plane.

"You have to be more aggressive," he said. "You have to clear the plane yourself, so you have to make an aggressive exit."

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## Navy commander testifies in his rape trial that 'no' meant 'keep going'

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A Navy commander accused of trying to rape a subordinate officer at her San Diego home last year testified Wednesday that she told him if she said "no" to his advances, she meant "keep going."

But when she yelled "stop!" and "get off," John Michael Neuhart II said, he understood her literal meaning.

"So there was no 'opposite-word!' meaning to those words?" Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Tag asked him.

Neuhart, 40, is on trial in San Diego Superior Court on three counts involving assault with intent to commit rape, as well as burglary for allegedly forcing his way into the woman's home and resisting arrest afterward. He could spend life in prison if convicted of the most serious charge.

On the witness stand, Neuhart said, "I believed it was all consensual between us. It made sense."

Tag dismissed his statement, calling it

"bizarre" that he and the highly intoxicated victim would agree beforehand that if she wanted him to stop their aggressive foreplay, he should ignore her words and continue.

Under questioning from his attorney, Brian White, Neuhart testified that "I did not try to rape [her]. I had no intention of raping [her]."

Prosecutors say that Neuhart, who at the time commanded a helicopter squadron in Guam, came to San Diego last year for a conference. On Sept. 11, he met for drinks with members of the squadron who were in town for training, and with the woman, a former squadron member who had transferred to Coronado as a helicopter flight instructor.

Neuhart has been relieved of his command while his trial is underway. He is assigned to headquarters section of San Diego-based Navy Region Southwest.

Security video from the downtown Manchester Grand Hyatt hotel, where they were drinking, was shown in court. The woman

can be seen staggering, barely standing up at some points, with Neuhart's arm around her as they walk down a hall and use an elevator.

The woman testified earlier in the trial that she became very drunk and ended up taking a ride-share or cab with Neuhart to her Valencia Park home. She said he pulled off her pants and nearly raped her as she repeatedly screamed at him to stop and leave.

Neuhart testified Tuesday and Wednesday that they discussed having sex at her house before they left the hotel. He said he "waivered" about it because he is married, with five children, and because he was her superior officer.

Tag said the hotel video showed the woman repeatedly pushing Neuhart away, including keeping her arms up between her body and his as they kissed. Neuhart testified that he recalled "her resting her arms on his chest" in a tender way.

He also said he asked the woman if she wanted a "safe word," which he understood

would mean that she was feeling safe as they flirting led to sex. Neuhart said she told him "no," which he took as the safe word she had chosen. He said that in the context of their time together, "no" meant "yes."

After letting Neuhart into her house, where they kissed and hugged, she ordered him out. He went around to the back door and set up his cellphone to record video of his repeated efforts to get inside. Neuhart testified that he did that so to have proof that, if they had sex, it was consensual. When the video was shown to jurors, Neuhart is shown loudly knocking on the door and tugging on the handles while the woman yelled at him to stop and go away. But, she eventually let him in and could be heard crying and screaming for him to stop.

A neighbor who heard her called 911. As San Diego police arrived, Neuhart ran out the back and into a canyon, with his still-recording cellphone in his pocket. He fell — fracturing his leg. Officers caught him and arrested him.

## MILITARY

## Troops: Official says data not meant to present accurate picture

## FROM FRONT PAGE

The Pentagon's previous number of troops in Syria was 503. Though the additional 1,500 acknowledged Wednesday is small compared with the size of Defense Department manpower — more than 246,000 in California alone, according to the data center — such discrepancies could help explain why 44,000 are unaccounted for.

## 'No easy way'

The data center is charged with accounting for troops and civilian personnel who fall under the Defense Department. The numbers are updated quarterly on the center's website, www.DMDC.osd.mil.

"Our commitment is to be as transparent as we can, within the constraints of operation security," Manning said.

The Pentagon acknowledged in a statement that it has no good way to track how many servicemembers are stationed overseas, where they are and when they were there.

"There is no one personnel system in the [Defense Department] that tracks the daily location of all DoD personnel. There is no easy way to track all deployments, training exercises, TDY (being attached to another unit for training or specific missions, typically for less than six months) or temporary assignments," according to the statement. "If you take the total numbers assigned in the United States and assigned overseas, and add the 'Unknown,' you get the total force numbers for each service."

However, another Pentagon spokesman questioned the value of the data center numbers.

"Those numbers are not meant to represent an accurate accounting of troops currently deployed to any location," said Eric Pahon. "They should not be relied upon for a current picture for what is going on."

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis ordered a review of how personnel are counted in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

"There's a very strange accounting procedure I inherited ... What I probably going to end up doing is outputting everyone into one thing and saying, 'Here's how many are really there now,'" Mattis said during a news conference in August.

## Complicated numbers

The murkiness of the posted numbers of personnel in locations across the world fueled a congressional outcry over a lack of knowledge of how many soldiers are stationed in Niger, where four Special Forces soldiers were killed Oct. 4 in an attack by militants thought to be associated with radical Islamists.

Prominent members of Congress,

including Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., claimed they had no idea that so many soldiers — about 800, according to Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — were deployed to Niger. The U.S. has maintained troops there since 2013 and has been involved in the country on and off for decades, Dunford said.

Pentagon officials say "accounting procedures" make knowing actual end strength difficult.

Troop numbers in Afghanistan peaked in 2010 with more than 100,000 troops deployed as part of former President Barack Obama's "surge" strategy to counter a patchwork of Taliban and other insurgent groups. Those numbers have been reduced drastically; the data center report states there are 16,500 DOD personnel in Afghanistan, including civilians.

The use of contractors in place of regular troops also complicates the issue. They do not typically fall under the total number of personnel deployed to war zones, and often take the place of normal unit personnel such as mechanics and truck drivers, as Afghanistan commanding officer Army Gen. John Nicholson told Congress earlier this year.

The U.S. maintains 23,659 contractors in Afghanistan and 4,609 in Iraq, according to a fourth-quarter 2017 report from the Defense Department. Many of them are local residents and foreign nationals hired to provide basic services at U.S. bases, but they also include many skilled workers, pilots, technicians and private security forces, according to the report.

The percentage of Defense Department personnel deployed to combat zones is small by Post-9/11 standards of hundreds of thousands of troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. But smaller numbers of "train-and-equip" specialists such as Special Forces and contractors are becoming ubiquitous in many countries in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, according to the data center report.

Obama set caps on numbers of troops near the end of his presidency, and deployed numbers dropped significantly. But President Donald Trump has given authorization for combatant commanders in theaters to have more discretion over how many troops are required.

"The delegation of this authority does not in itself change the force levels for Afghanistan," Mattis said in a statement after Trump's directives. "Rather, it ensures the Department of Defense can facilitate our missions and align our commitment to the rapidly evolving security situation, giving our troops greater latitude to provide air power and other vital support."

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CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson, right, answers a question about military acquisitions during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Thursday. Also attending the hearing are, from left, Ellen Lord, under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology, and logistics; Army Secretary Mark Esper; and James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

## Panel: Military must keep up acquisition reforms

By CLAUDIA GRISALES  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Senate panel on Thursday implored military leaders to keep up Defense Department acquisition reforms and to help stem a series of financial and competitive losses in recent years.

Senate Armed Services Committee members said during a Capitol Hill hearing that the military's efforts to improve its acquisition programs has been positive but much work remains.

"Acquisition reform is one of the most important — and frustrating — topics this committee addresses. For years, we have been warned that America is losing its technological advantage," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., told military officials. "The Department of Defense needs acquisition reform — not just for efficiency or to save money. Simply put, we will not be able to address the threats facing this nation with the system of organized irresponsibility that the defense acquisition enterprise has become."

The military officials who testified, which included representatives for the Department of Defense, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, said they are making progress with their acquisition program reforms.

Among the improvements, the services have gained new freedoms through legislation to move forward in their own acquisition programs faster, the panel of witnesses said. Also, the time that it takes to make an acquisition is getting shorter and the paperwork required for requests for proposals is being reduced.

But military officials conceded there's plenty of work to do.

"I am encouraged by the progress the Army has made, consistent with congressional direc-

tion to begin overhauling the current system," said Mark Esper, who was sworn in last month as Army secretary. "To be sure, a long ride lies ahead and the challenges are great."

The Army is implementing a five-part acquisition reform effort, including mapping out a new command, the most significant change to the Army's procurement system since 1973, Esper said.

Ellen Lord, undersecretary of defense acquisition, technology and logistics, said she is hopeful that acquisition reforms will be addressed quickly, especially now that the Pentagon and Capitol Hill are working toward the same goal.

"Previously, I don't think the focus was on cost-effective, quick solutions, and I don't think people had the intestinal fortitude to come up here to say what needed to be changed," Lord said. "We have an environment now where we have a huge amount of people that are all aligned on the same objective ... and I see a lot of momentum between the (Pentagon) and the Hill to work together to achieve our shared goals."

Among its new efforts, the Pentagon is moving forward with a restructuring of its Office of Under Secretary of Defense, adding two new undersecretaries to address acquisition, technology, logistics and research engineering. The new undersecretaries will solve critical technical warfighting challenges and will focus on improving the affordability and timely delivery of defense equipment and supplies, Lord said.

The department is also shaping up its modernization strategy to line up with congressional goals for the new undersecretaries, Lord said.

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## NATION/WORLD

# Paestinians protest Trump move on Jerusalem

By ILAN BEN ZION  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Hundreds of Palestinian protesters clashed with Israeli troops across the West Bank on Thursday while demonstrators in Gaza burned posters of President Donald Trump over his widely denounced decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The leader of the Hamas militant group, which runs Gaza, called for a new armed uprising in a widespread show of anger as the demonstrators torched American and Israeli flags.

In the West Bank, crowds of protesters set tires on fire and hurled stones at Israeli troops. In Bethlehem, troops fired water cannons and tear gas to disperse a crowd in clashes that could cloud the upcoming Christmas celebrations in the town of Jesus' birth. In Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian government, protesters set tires on fire, sending a thick plume of black smoke over the city.

Trump's dramatic break on Wednesday with decades of U.S. policy on Jerusalem counters long-standing international assurances to the Palestinians that the fate of the city will be determined in negotiations. The Palestinians seek Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, captured by Israel in 1967, as a future capital.

Palestinians shuttered their schools and shops on Thursday to begin three "days of rage" over Trump's decision. Rallies were underway in other West Bank cities, and a demonstration was being held outside the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem's Old City.

"We are here. We believe in our rights," said Rania Hatem, a protester outside the Old City.

Palestinian officials said dozens of protesters were lightly wounded, most from tear gas inhalation. Friday, the Muslim holy day when Palestinians gather for weekly mass prayers, could prove more violent.

In the Gaza Strip, Hamas' lead-



MOHAMMED ZAATARI/AP

**Lebanese and Palestinian students chant and hold Palestinian flags during a protest Thursday in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon. A number of U.S. allies in the Middle East are condemning the Trump administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.**

er Ismail Haniyeh called on Palestinians to launch a new intifada, or uprising, against Israel on Friday.

"The American decision is an aggression on our people and a war on our sanctuaries," Haniyeh said in a speech, urging supporters "to be ready for any orders."

"We want the uprising to last and continue to let Trump and the occupation regret this decision," he said.

The Israeli military said two rockets were fired from Gaza but fell short, landing in Palestinian territory. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Hamas, a group that seeks Israel's destruction, killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks in the early 2000s.

But the group's capabilities are more limited now. Gaza, Hamas' stronghold, is closed by an Israeli blockade, while in the West Bank, many of its members have been arrested. Nonetheless, it possesses a large arsenal of rockets in Gaza capable of striking much of Israel.

The Israeli military said it would deploy several battalions to the West Bank ahead of Friday, while other troops have been put on alert to address "possible developments."

The conflicting claims to Jerusalem, and especially its Old City, where sacred Jewish, Muslim and Christian holy sites are located, lie at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While Trump's decision had no impact

on the city's daily life, it carried deep symbolic meaning and was seen as an attempt to impose a solution on the Palestinians.

Israel, which claims all of Jerusalem as its undivided capital, has welcomed Trump's decision. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Trump "bound himself forever" to the history of Jerusalem with the move and claimed other states are considering following suit.

"We are already in contact with other states that will make a similar recognition," he said Thursday.

Anger at the U.S. has rippled across the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia's royal court condemned the Trump administra-

tion's decision in a rare public rebuke by the U.S. ally. The regional powerhouse, which could help the White House push through a Middle East settlement, said Thursday it had already warned against this step and "continues to express its deep regret at the U.S. administration's decision," describing it as "unjustified and irresponsible."

Trump's move puts the Sunni nation in a bind. The kingdom, particularly its powerful crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman, enjoys close relations with Trump and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who leads Trump's efforts to restart Mideast peace talks.

U.S. embassies across much of the Middle East and parts of Africa warned American citizens of possible protests following Trump's move.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas suggested that with Trump's move, the United States disqualified itself as mediator, a role it has played exclusively in more than two decades of stop-and-go negotiations aimed at setting up a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The stalled talks have failed to bring the Palestinians closer to the state they seek in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, lands Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war. Israel has meanwhile steadily expanded Jewish settlements on war-torn lands even as it said it wants to negotiate.

Trump's claim Wednesday that he still wants to pursue what he has called the "ultimate" deal was met by mounting skepticism.

"With its decision, the U.S. has isolated itself and Israel, and has pushed the area into a dangerous situation and stopped the peace process," said Nabil Abu Rdenah, a senior Abbas aide.

At a meeting Thursday with his closest Arab ally, Jordan's King Abdullah II, Abbas said he is rallying international opposition to Trump's decision, which he called "an unacceptable crime."

## House GOP confident vote will avert government shutdown

By ALAN FRAM  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Top Republicans left no doubt that the House would approve legislation Thursday preventing a weekend partial government shutdown, erasing any suspense over an impending budget clash that would put a calamitous exclamation point at the end of the capital's tumultuous year.

"I feel good where we are," House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., told reporters hours before his chamber planned to vote on legislation keeping federal agencies afloat through Dec. 22. Their money runs out at midnight Friday without approval of fresh funding, and Senate approval was also expected.

The leader of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, whose members had been threatening to withhold needed support, also made clear that the bill would be approved.

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., said House

Majority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., told him Republicans had the votes needed to approve the short-term spending measure. Freedom Caucus members will likely give leaders whatever support they need to pass the legislation, Meadows said.

Meadows said they'll help it pass to avoid distractions from the GOP drive to push their treasured \$1.5 trillion tax bill through Congress this month. That measure, which mostly benefits businesses and upper-income people, is President Donald Trump's and the GOP's top remaining priority and would be their first major legislative triumph of the year.

But hours before Trump was to bargain with congressional leaders at the White House over longer-term spending decisions, Meadows said the conservatives would oppose any agreement they feel allows excessive federal spending.

"I want to avoid a headline that says President Trump's administration just passes the highest spending levels in U.S. history," Meadows told two reporters. "There will be

zero support on numbers that are too high, regardless of anybody's position on that."

He also said Ryan promised he'd fight in coming weeks to pass a full-year budget for the military and leave fights with Democrats over domestic spending for later. It is unclear how that strategy would work, since Republicans control the Senate 52-48 and will need at least eight Democratic votes to pass any spending legislation.

In another brewing battle, Meadows said conservatives would strongly oppose any spending bill with provisions extending protections for hundreds of thousands of immigrants who arrived in the U.S. illegally as children. Trump ended safeguards against deportation three months ago, but Democrats are demanding their revival and Trump has expressed openness to restoring them.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., told reporters Thursday that lawmakers "will not leave here" without approval of language helping those immigrants.

The prospects for successful White

House talks were buffeted Wednesday when Trump blurted to reporters that a shutdown "could happen." He blamed Democrats, saying they want "illegal immigrants pouring into our country, bringing with them crime, tremendous amounts of crime."

The one-week spending bill also makes money available to several states that are running out of funds for the Children's Health Insurance Program. That widely popular program provides medical care to more than 8 million children.

While many Democrats seemed likely to oppose the short-term bill, enough were expected to support it in the Senate to allow its passage there. They know they'd still have leverage on subsequent bills needed to keep the government running.

Democrats have been using their leverage to insist on spending boosts for health care, infrastructure and other domestic programs that would match increases Republicans want for defense.

## NATION

# Ex-host Keillor hits station over firing without full review

By JEFF BAENEN  
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Garrison Keillor says Minnesota Public Radio was wrong to fire him last week without fully investigating what a senior executive has described as “multiple allegations” spanning an extended period against the former “A Prairie Home Companion” host.

Jon McTaggart, CEO of MPR’s parent company, American Public Media Group, addressed the issue at an employee meeting Wednesday. McTaggart didn’t provide details of the allegations against the veteran broadcaster, saying only that he has shared them with lawyers and board members.

MPR News reporters refused to attend the meeting because its contents had been declared off the record, but they compiled a report based on interviews with colleagues who did.

In a statement Thursday morning, MPR insisted it conducted a proper review. The statement said two people formerly associated with the show alleged “multiple incidents of inappropriate behavior” by Keillor. 75, though only one claimed the behavior was directed at her. The station said it hasn’t made additional details public because the two want privacy.

“The allegations were carefully investigated before MPR made the decision to terminate

contracts with Mr. Keillor,” the station said.

Keillor announced Nov. 30 that MPR had terminated his contracts after four decades of entertaining public radio listeners with tales of small-town characters. He said he was fired over “a story that I think is more interesting and more complicated than the version MPR heard.” Keillor didn’t provide details to The Associated Press but later told the Minneapolis Star Tribune that he had put his hand onto a woman’s bare back as he tried to console her.

Keillor retired as host of “A Prairie Home Companion” in 2016 but had continued to work for MPR on various projects.

McTaggart said Wednesday that no one else in the company knows the content of the “multiple allegations” against Keillor that span an extended period of time.

Keillor told the AP in an email later Wednesday that he was not at the meeting hosted by McTaggart so he couldn’t provide details of what was said. But he expressed disappointment at the company’s response to the allegations.

“I expect to deal with MPR soon to try to fix the enormous mistake they have made by not conducting a full and fair investigation,” he said.

“A Prairie Home Companion” continues with Keillor’s hand-picked successor, mandolinist Chris Thile.

## Veterans advocates urge lawmakers to OK caregiver benefits

By NIKKI WENTLING  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Some veterans organizations on Wednesday urged lawmakers to pass legislative reforms for the Department of Veterans Affairs that include a mandate to expand caregiver benefits to veterans injured before 9/11, a group that isn’t eligible now.

Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Paralyzed Veterans of America went to the Capitol and presented lawmakers with a printed petition, which stood several feet high and contained more than 182,000 signatures from people supportive of the expansion.

“We now have to see a finish line, but it has to get done,” said Carl Blake, interim director of Paralyzed Veterans of America. “It’s not acceptable to wrangle over this any longer. Get it done. That’s our call to the Senate and the House.”

Benefits such as monthly sti-

pend, health insurance and medical training to family caregivers and access to home health aids is now available only to post-9/11 veterans through a caregiver program implemented in 2010.

An expansion of the benefits to all veterans is tucked inside a larger, \$54 billion Senate bill to overhaul the VA Choice program, which regulates when veterans can go into the private sector for medical treatment. Under the bill — titled the Caring for our Veterans Act of 2017 — caregiver benefits immediately would become available to veterans injured before May 7, 1975. Two years after the bill is enacted, veterans injured between 1975 and 2001 would be eligible.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the expansion would cost \$3.4 billion for five years.

The Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee advanced the bill to the Senate floor last week.

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J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., center, arrives Thursday at the Senate on Capitol Hill in Washington with his wife, Franni Bryson, to make a statement regarding accusations of sexual misconduct.

# Al Franken announces he'll resign from Senate

By ANDREW TAYLOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Minnesota Sen. Al Franken said Thursday he will resign from Congress in coming weeks following a wave of sexual misconduct allegations and a collapse of support from his Democratic colleagues, a swift political fall for a once-rising Democratic star.

“I may be resigning my seat, but I am not giving up my voice,” Franken said in the otherwise-hushed Senate chamber.

Franken quit just a day after new allegations brought the number of women alleging misconduct by him to at least eight. Wednesday morning, one woman said he forcibly tried to kiss her in 2006, an accusation he vehemently denied. Hours later, another woman said Franken inappropriately squeezed “a handful of flesh” on her waist while posing for a photo with her in 2009.

“I know in my heart that nothing I have done as a senator — nothing — has brought dishonor on this institution,” Franken declared Thursday.

Franken, the former comedian who made his name on “Saturday Night Live,” originally had sought to remain in the Senate and to cooperate with an ethics investigation, saying he would work to regain the trust of Minnesotans.

“Some of the allegations against me are simply not true,” Franken said Thursday. “Others I remember quite differently.” Still, he said he could not both cooperate with an investigation and fully carry out his duties to his constituents.

Franken had gained respect as a serious lawmaker in recent years and even has been men-

tioned in talk about the 2020 presidential campaign.

His resignation means Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton, a fellow Democrat, will name a temporary replacement. The winner of a special election in November would serve through the end of Franken’s term in January of 2021. Among the possibilities is Lt. Gov. Tina Smith, a trusted ally.

“Enough is enough,” Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand D-N.Y., declared Wednesday. “We need to draw a line in the sand and say none of it is OK, none of it is acceptable, and we, as elected leaders, should absolutely be held to a higher standard.”

A torrent of Democrats quickly followed Gillibrand.

“I’m shocked and appalled by Sen. Franken’s behavior,” said Sen. Patty Murray, of Washington state. “It’s clear to me that this has been a deeply harmful, persistent problem and a clear pattern over a long period of time. It’s time for him to step aside.”

Franken had acknowledged and apologized for some inappropriate behavior, but he strongly denies the new accusation that came from a former Democratic congressional aide, who said he

tried to forcibly kiss her after a taping of his radio show in 2006.

The woman, who was not identified, told Politico that she ducked to avoid his lips but Franken told her, “It’s my right as an entertainer.”

Franken said the idea he would claim such conduct as a right was “preposterous.”

The pressure on him to leave mounted this week after Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., resigned following numerous allegations of sexual misconduct. Rep. Ruben Kihuen, D-Nev., faces pressure to resign as well over allegations reported by BuzzFeed that he repeatedly propositioned a former campaign worker.

While Franken is departing, Alabama GOP Senate candidate Roy Moore could be arriving, if he prevails in a Dec. 12 special election. Multiple women have accused Moore, 70, of sexual or other misconduct with them when they were teens and he was a deputy district attorney in his 30s. If Moore is elected, it could create a political nightmare for Republicans, who have promised an ethics probe.

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## NATION

# S. Calif. freeway closed by wildfire

BY AMANDA LEE MYERS  
AND ANDREW DALTON  
Associated Press

VENTURA, Calif. — Authorities closed a major freeway Thursday as flames from the largest and most destructive Southern California wildfire jumped lanes and churned toward coastal and mountain communities northwest of Los Angeles while crews kept an eye on unpredictable winds.

A more favorable wind forecast still called for potentially dangerous gusts but ones not likely to approach historic levels forecasters had feared, according to the National Weather Service.

"This is good news for the fire crews as the winds will not be driven quite as vigorously," a weather service statement said.

Calmer overnight conditions helped crews protect the Ventura County resort town of Ojai, where most of the 7,000 residents were under new evacuation orders following a big burst of wind late Wednesday. Evacuations were also ordered for the first time in Santa Barbara County, where the coastal city of Carpinteria was under threat.

Officials closed U.S. 101 for more than a dozen miles along the coast, cutting off a major route between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties for several hours as fire churned heavy brush along lanes.

Southern California has been hit hard by four major fires that have put tens of thousands of people under evacuation orders and destroyed nearly 200 homes and buildings.

Miles of cellphones buzzed loudly Wednesday night from San Diego to Santa Barbara with a sound that usually means an



NOAH BERGER/AP

A firefighter battles a wildfire in Ojai, Calif., on Thursday.

Amber Alert, but this time meant a rare weather warning for strong winds and extreme fire danger.

Officials hope the electronic push will keep the region alert and the fire death toll at zero.

In what may have been an early sign of the 140-square-mile fire getting new life, several thousand new evacuations were ordered Wednesday night in Ojai, a town of artists and resorts. The blaze had been creeping there already, but an increase in winds pushed it close enough for many more to flee.

Wild winds could easily make new fires explode too, as one did Wednesday in Los Angeles' exclusive Bel-Air section, where a fire consumed multimillion-dollar houses that give the rich and famous sweeping views of Los Angeles.

On Wednesday, fire exploded on the steep slopes of Sepulveda Pass, closing a section of heavily traveled Interstate 405 and destroying four homes.

Flames burned a wine storage shed at media mogul Rupert Murdoch's 16-acre Moraga Vineyards estate and appeared to have damaged about 7 acres of vines, a spokeswoman said.

Across the wide I-405 freeway



JAC K. HONG/AP

A wildfire threatens homes as it burns along a hillside in La Conchita, Calif., on Thursday.

from the fire, the Getty Center art complex was closed to protect its collection from smoke damage. Many schools across Los Angeles were closed because of poor air quality, and classes were canceled at 265 schools Thursday.

Back in the beachside city of Ventura, the fire killed more than two dozen horses at a stable and

had destroyed at least 150 structures, a number that was expected to get far bigger as firefighters are able to assess losses.

Air tankers that had been grounded by high winds flew on Wednesday, dropping flame retardant. Firefighters rushed to attack the fires before winds picked up again.

## Ex-SC cop gets 20 years in prison for fatal shooting

By MEG KINNARD  
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — A white former South Carolina officer was sentenced to 20 years in prison on Thursday for fatally shooting an unarmed black motorist in the back in 2015, wrapping up a case that became a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Attorneys for ex-North Charleston Officer Michael Slager said he shot Walter Scott, 50, in self-defense after the two fought, and Scott grabbed Slager's stun gun. They said race didn't play a role in the shooting and that Slager never had any "racial animus" toward minorities.

Still, Slager pleaded guilty in federal court to violating Scott's civil rights. As part of the plea agreement reached in May, prosecutors dropped state murder charges. A year ago, a state judge declared a mistrial when jurors deadlocked in that case.

A bystander recorded the shooting on a cellphone, and it was shared around the world, setting off protests across the U.S. as demonstrators said it was another egregious example of police officers mistreating blacks.

Scott's family testified before the sentence was handed down and said they had forgiven Slager.

The shooting angered local blacks who complained for years that North Charleston police harassed blacks, pulling them over or questioning them unnecessarily as they cracked down on crime. But after the shooting, the Scott family successfully pleaded for calm, asking everyone to let the justice system run its course.

Before the sentence was handed down, the judge had to decide whether the shooting amounted to second-degree murder or manslaughter. Norton found that it was murder.

"No matter what sentence I give, neither the Scott family nor the Slager family is going to think that it's right," the judge said.

The bystander's video started after the struggle between Slager and Scott, and showed Scott running away and the officer firing eight times. Scott was hit in the back five times.

After the shooting, Slager picked up his stun gun and placed it next to Scott. Slager contends he was securing the weapon. Prosecutors think he put it there to bolster his self-defense story.

The judge also found that Slager, 36, obstructed justice when he made statements to state police after the shooting.

A pre-sentencing report for Slager found that he committed manslaughter and recommended 10 to nearly 13 years in prison. But the judge was not bound by that review.

## FBI director counters Trump's attacks on agency

By SADIE GURMAN  
AND ERIC TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — FBI Director Christopher Wray on Thursday countered strident attacks on his agency by President Donald Trump, saying, "There is no finer institution than the FBI."

Wray testified before the House Judiciary Committee as Democrats and Republicans clashed over the significance of Trump's attacks on the agency. In a storm of tweets last weekend, Trump called the nation's top law enforcement agency a biased institution whose reputation is "in Tatters — worst in History!" and urged Wray to "clean house."

Democrats pushed Wray to respond forcefully, while Republicans echoed Trump in suggesting they worry about political bias in

special counsel Robert Mueller's probe of possible Trump campaign ties to Russia during the 2016 presidential election. Like Trump, they seized on revelations that an FBI agent was removed from Mueller's team because of anti-Trump texts.

"There is no shortage of opinions out there, but what I can tell you is that the FBI that I see is tens of thousands of agents and analysts and staff working their tails off to keep Americans safe," Wray said of the agency he has led for just four months.

Wray conceded that agents do make mistakes and said there are processes in place to hold them accountable.

His defense of the FBI came after the committee's chairman, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., said he was concerned by reports about Peter Strzok, a veteran counterintelligence agent involved in the Clinton investigation, being

removed from Mueller's team last summer following the discovery of text messages seen as potentially anti-Trump.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, of New York, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary panel, told Wray, "Your responsibility is not only to defend the bureau but to push back against the president when he is so clearly wrong, both on the facts and as a matter of principle."

Wray's tenure as the new FBI chief would be difficult enough even without the scrutiny of the Russia investigation. Since he was sworn in on Aug. 2, the U.S. has experienced two mass shootings and an attack in Manhattan.

Wray repeatedly deflected questions about the FBI's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation, saying the entire matter was under review by the Justice Department's inspector general.



## NATION



PROVIDED BY LUKAS PANZARIN/AP

This illustration depicts a Halszkaraptor escuilliei dinosaur. The creature, about 18 inches tall, roamed about 75 million years ago.

## Newly found dinosaur looks like mix of duck, croc, ostrich, swan

By SETH BORENSTEIN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With a bill like a duck but teeth like a croc, a swanlike neck and killer claws, a new dinosaur species uncovered by scientists looks like something Dr. Seuss could have dreamed up.

It also had flippers like a penguin, and while it walked like an ostrich it could also swim. That's the first time swimming ability has been shown for a two-legged, meat-eating dinosaur.

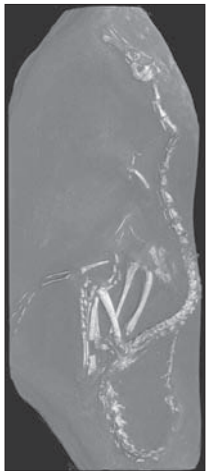
The tiny creature, only about 18 inches tall, roamed 75 million years ago in what is now Mongolia. Its full curled-up skeleton was found in a sandstone rock.

"It's such a peculiar animal," said Dennis Voeten, a paleontology researcher at Palacký University in the Czech Republic. "It combines different parts we knew from other groups into this one small animal."

In a study released Wednesday by the journal Nature, Voeten and coauthors named it Halszkaraptor escuilliei or "Halszka" after the late Polish paleontologist Halszka Osmolska.

Paleontologist Kristi Curry Rogers, of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., who didn't participate in the study, called it "a pretty crazy chimera: a swan neck and dinosaur body, but with a mouthful of tiny teeth and hands and feet that look like they might be good for swimming."

Its mashup body let it run and hunt on the ground and fish in



PAUL TAFFOREAU, ESRF/AP

This image provided by the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility shows a view from a 3D rendering of the Halszkaraptor escuilliei dinosaur fossil computed from data obtained at the ESRF in Grenoble, France.

fresh water, said study co-author Paul Tafforeau. He's a paleontologist at the ESRF, known as the

European Synchrotron in Grenoble, France, a powerful X-ray generator where numerous tests were made on the fossil.

Lead author Andrea Cau, a paleontologist at the Geological Museum Capellini in Bologna, Italy, said that at first, he was highly suspicious about the fossil's authenticity, both because of its appearance and the fact that the rock containing the skeleton had been smuggled out of Mongolia and left in a private collector's hands.

"I asked myself, 'Is this a real, natural skeleton, or an artifact, a chimera? If this is a fake, how could I demonstrate it?'" Cau said in an email. "Assuming it was a fake instead of starting assuming that the fossil is genuine was the most appropriate way to start the investigation of such a bizarre fossil."

So researchers used the Synchrotron to create three-dimensional images of the fossil, which showed the creature was indeed a single animal and not a concoction built up from several sources. For example, an arm hidden in the rock perfectly matched the visible left arm, and lines indicating growth matched up across the bones.

Even though the creature wasn't dreamed up by Dr. Seuss, it got a blessing from Dr. A. Dues.

Hans Sues, a paleontologist at the Smithsonian Institution who wasn't part of the research, praised the work and said it "shows again how amazingly diverse dinosaurs were."

## Tillerson: Ukraine a sticking point in US-Russia ties

By JOSH LEDERMAN  
Associated Press

VIENNA — Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Thursday that Ukraine was the sole sticking point keeping the United States and Russia from forging a closer relationship.

President Donald Trump campaigned on the need to improve ties with Russia, Tillerson said, adding that "normalizing" relations between the nuclear powers was something the U.S. "badly would like to do." He said that from the start, the Trump administration had told Moscow that addressing Ukraine was essential to warmer ties.

"We can have differences in other arenas, in Syria; we can have differences in other areas," Tillerson said. "But when one country invades another, that is a difference that is hard to look past or to reconcile."

The assessment from America's top diplomat notably played down other areas of dispute, particularly Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election. U.S. intelligence agencies, including the CIA and FBI, have concluded the Kremlin interfered in the election in an effort to help Trump.

Trump has repeatedly cast doubt on that finding, and a special counsel is investigating if members of the Trump campaign colluded with the Russian effort. He has said he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin's denials that the Moscow meddled.

But Tillerson hasn't shied away from accusing the Kremlin of

election interference. One of the Trump team's toughest voices on Russia, he said in a speech last week there was "clear evidence of Russia meddling in democratic elections in the U.S. and Europe" and he called it part an "active threat of a recently resurgent Russia."

Tillerson's focus on Ukraine came as he met with European diplomats at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, established during the Cold War to serve as a bridge between East and West. Tillerson insisted the U.S. could never accept Russia's "attempted annexation" of Crimea or Moscow's military intrusion in eastern Ukraine.

"We should be clear about the source of this violence," Tillerson said. "Russia is arming, leading, training and fighting alongside anti-government forces."

The sharp rebuke of Russia came just before Tillerson met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Seated around a large table with their aides, the two said nothing of substance when reporters were allowed in for a few seconds to witness the start of their meeting.

Earlier, in remarks at the OSCE conference, Lavrov said Ukraine was dragging its heels regarding proposals for U.N. peacekeepers, as well as obstructing several international channels set up to try to reduce violence and move toward a resolution to the conflict.

"The whole responsibility for it lies with the Ukrainian authorities," Lavrov said.

## 2 students, suspect dead in shooting at NM school

Associated Press

'AZTEC, N.M. — A shooting at a high school in a small New Mexico town left two students and the suspect dead, authorities said Thursday as schools throughout the area remained on lockdown as a precaution.

State police did not release any details about the shooter but confirmed the other two people who were killed attended Aztec High School. No other injuries were reported, officials said.

The school of about 900 students was cordoned off as authorities cleared the buildings and teens were taken to another location.

A crowd of nervous parents gathered outside City Hall to wait for more information as officers tried to reassure them about the safety of their children.

"The families of the victims were notified immediately. They are in our thoughts and prayers," state police said in a statement on social media.

State and federal authorities are investigating what led to the shooting and did not immediately release any details about the circumstances. A news conference was planned.

Aztec is a rural community of 6,500 people in the heart of northwestern New Mexico's oil and gas country and near the Navajo Nation. Its main street is lined by old brick buildings that date back more than a century.

Residents voiced disbelief on social media, while members of the New Mexico congressional delegation, state Attorney General Hector Balderas and other elected officials offered their condolences and other assistance.

# NATION

# 3-D scans to be tested in mammogram study

By LAURAN NEERGAARD

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A better mammogram? Increasingly, women are asked whether they want 3-D mammograms instead of the regular X-rays — and now U.S. health officials are starting a huge study to tell whether the newer, sometimes pricier choice really improves screening for breast cancer.

It's the latest dilemma in a field that already vexes women with conflicting guidelines on when to get checked: starting at age 40, 45 or 50? Annually or every other year?

The issue is mammograms can save lives if they catch aggressive breast cancers early. But they also can harm through frequent false alarms and by spotting tumors that grow so slowly they never would have posed a threat — overdiagnosis that means some women undergo unneeded treatment.

That trade-off is a key question as doctors begin recruiting 165,000 women nationally to compare potentially more beneficial 3-D mammograms — known scientifically

as “tomosynthesis” — with standard two-dimensional digital mammography.

The 3-D mammograms have been marketed as being able to find more cancers.

“But the idea isn't so much finding more cancers as finding the cancers that are going to be life-threatening,” said Dr. Worta McCaskill-Stevens of the National Cancer Institute, which is funding the new research to tell whether the 3-D scans truly pinpoint the tumors that matter most.

It's one of the largest randomized trials of mammography in decades, and scientists designed the research to do more than answer that key 3-D question. They hope the findings also will help clear some of the confusion surrounding best screening practices.

“The most important thing about this study is that it's moving us to individualized screening as opposed to what we have now, which is one-size-fits-all screening,” predicted study chair Dr. Etta Pisano, a radiologist at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Standard mammograms take X-rays from two sides of the breast. With tomosynthesis, additional X-rays are taken at differ-

ent angles — not truly three-dimensional but a computer compiles them into a 3-D-like image. First approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2011, they're not yet standard in part because of questions that the new study aims to answer.

Some studies have found tomosynthesis detects more cancer with fewer false alarms; they're often advertised as particularly useful for younger women's dense breasts.

When deciding, understand that mammograms come with pros and cons, and weigh them, said Dr. Otis Brawley, the American Cancer Society's chief medical officer.

Breast cancer is far less common at age 40 than at age 50 and beyond. After menopause, tumors tend to grow more slowly and women's breast tissue becomes less dense and easier for mammograms to provide a clearer image.

For every 1,000 women screened every other year until their 70s, about 40 instead of 50 would prevent one additional death — but would create 576 more false alarms and 58 extra, unneeded biopsies, the task force estimated. Also, two extra

women would be treated for tumors that never would have become life-threatening — that overdiagnosis problem.

As for what type to choose, some insurers, including Medicare, cover the 3-D version, and a small number of states mandate coverage. Other insurers may require women to pay \$50 to \$100 more out of pocket. Whoever ultimately pays, extra time to analyze the scans adds to the cost.

In the study, about 100 mammography clinics across the U.S., and a few in Canada, will enroll healthy women ages 45 to 74 who already are planning to get routine mammograms. They'll be assigned randomly to get either the regular or the 3-D version for five years. Most will be screened annually, but post-menopausal women who don't have certain cancer risk factors will be screened every other year.

Researchers will track every woman's results including samples from biopsies plus genetic and other tests, as well as how many cancers are found. It is hoped that the giant database will help them tease out more information about which women benefit most from what type and frequency of screening.

# Researchers seek to study pot for pets

By ANDREW SELSKY

Associated Press

BEND, Ore. — Dr. Byron Maas surveyed a supply of marijuana products for dogs that lines a shelf in his veterinary clinic. They're selling well.

“The ‘Up and Moving’ is for joints and for pain,” he explained. “The ‘Calm and Quiet’ is for real anxious dogs, to take away that anxiety.”

People anxious to relieve suffering in their pets are increasingly turning to oils and powders that contain CBD, a nonpsychoactive component of marijuana. But there's little data on whether they work, or whether they have harmful side effects.

That's because Washington has been standing in the way of clinical trials, veterinarians and researchers say. Now, a push is underway to have barriers removed so both pets and people can benefit. Those barriers have long been just a chilling effect.

When the federal Drug Enforcement Administration announced last year that even marijuana extracts with CBD and little or no THC — marijuana's intoxicating component — are an illegal Schedule 1 drug, the University of Pennsylvania halted its clinical trial. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has warned companies that sell marijuana products online and via pet shops and animal hospitals that they're violating laws by offering “unapproved new animal drugs.” The FDA threatened legal action.

But, seeing potential benefits of CBDs, the American Veterinary Medical Association's policy-making body said last summer it wants the DEA to declassify marijuana as a Schedule 1 drug “to facilitate research opportunities for veterinary and human medical uses.” It asked the board of the national veterinarians' organization to investigate working with other stakeholders toward that goal. The board is awaiting a recommendation from two group councils.

“The concern our membership has is worry about people extrapolating their own dosages, looking to medicate their pets outside the realm of the medical professional,” Board Chairman Michael Whitehair said in a telephone interview. “This is an important reason for us to continue the research.”

Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, a conservative Republican, became an unlikely champion of this push when he



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

**Luke Byerly puts CBD oil onto the dinner for his beagle, Robbie, at a veterinary clinic in east Denver in October.**

introduced a bill in September that would open the path for more clinical research. While Hatch said he opposes recreational marijuana use, he wants marijuana-based drugs, regulated by the FDA, produced for people with disorders. “We lack the science to support use of medical marijuana products like CBD oils, not because researchers are unwilling to do the work, but because of bureaucratic red tape and over-regulation,” Hatch said.

Dawn Boothe, of Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine, is waiting for federal approval to begin a study of marijuana's effects on dogs with epilepsy. The classification of marijuana products containing CBD as a Schedule 1 drug, the same category as heroin and LSD, creates a “major, major, terrible roadblock” for researchers, Boothe said in a phone interview.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine were studying CBD's effects on dogs with osteoarthritis and pruritis, or itchiness, until the DEA released its policy statement.

“The ambiguity in this process has really brought us to a screaming halt,” said Michael DiGregorio, director of the university's clinical trials center. “It is research that needs to be done, because there are a lot of CBD products out there.”

# Viagra goes generic: Pfizer launching little white pill

By LINDA A. JOHNSON

Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. — The little blue pill that's helped millions of men in the bedroom is turning white. Drugmaker Pfizer is launching its own cheaper, generic version of Viagra rather than lose most sales when the anti-impotence pill gets its first generic competition next week.

Pfizer Inc. will begin selling the white pill at half the \$65-per-pill retail price on Monday, when its patent-protected monopoly ends. Generic maker Teva Pharmaceuticals can start selling its version then, but isn't disclosing the price.

Many more generics go on sale next summer, which will slash the price of generics steadily, possibly by 90 percent.

“Patients are paying fortunes. When generic Viagra comes out, they will be very happy,” said Dr. Nachum Katlowitz, a urologist at New York's Staten Island University Hospital.

Launched in 1998, Viagra was the first pill for impotence. It transformed a private frustration for many aging men into a publicly discussed medical condition with an easy treatment, far more appealing than options like penile injections and implants. Pfizer's early TV ads for the little blue pill even coined the term erectile dysfunction, ED for short.

Pfizer's Cialis came out in 2003 and now dominates the U.S. market with on-demand pills and daily, low-dosage ones. Viagra is a close second.

Pfizer says its market research shows 20 percent of customers are loyal to Viagra. So rather than give up sales to generic makers as brand-name drugmakers once routinely did, the company

is selling its own generic and also is fighting to keep men on its blue pills.

“We believe that the story for Viagra isn't done. It's just going to be a new chapter,” said Jim Sage, president of U.S. health care for Pfizer's Essential Health, which sells its older medicines.

In January, the drugmaker will offer two new discount programs and will increase its copayment card discounts. Uninsured men can get brand-name Viagra half off through an innovative, online, home-delivery program, Pfizer Direct. Many insured patients will be able to get a month's prescription — typically six to 10 pills, depending on plan limits — for as little as a \$20 copayment.

“This is the most comprehensive pricing and marketing response I've seen to a generic,” said Erik Gordon, a pharmaceuticals analyst at the University of Michigan's business school. “It's unprecedented.”

Gordon thinks Pfizer's reduced prices will retain some patients and will attract others who buy pills, often counterfeits, from the internet.

Dr. Matthias Hofer, a urologist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, said some of his insured patients who take Viagra wouldn't want a generic. “They will be ecstatic if they can save money and get the brand product from Pfizer,” he said.

Last year, more than 12 million prescriptions for Viagra and Cialis were filled in the U.S., generating a combined \$3 billion in sales, according to health data and clinical research company IQVIA. However, prescriptions have dropped more than 20 percent since 2012, as repackaged price increases put the pills out of reach for many men lacking good insurance.

## NATION

## Son of ex-Rep. Conyers arrested, not charged in domestic abuse case

BY MICHAEL BALSAMO  
AND JEFF KAROUB  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The son of former Democratic Rep. John Conyers, who's a possible candidate for his father's vacated U.S. House seat, was arrested in February in Los Angeles after his girlfriend told police he body-slammed and then stabbed her during an argument, but prosecutors declined to bring charges.

Documents obtained by The Associated Press on Wednesday show John Conyers III's girlfriend had a small cut to her arm. Prosecutors said they didn't have independent witnesses and didn't believe they could prove the victim's injuries weren't accidental.

The arrest first was reported by NBC.

The younger Conyers, 27, told police he accidentally stabbed her after she threatened him with a knife, he disarmed her and they struggled. The girlfriend said she grabbed the knife for protection after he body-slammed her, pinned her down and spit on her. She said he took the knife from her and cut her.

The woman told authorities the incident began when he accused her of cheating on him after checking her computer.

After his girlfriend filed for a restraining order in March, Conyers responded in court documents, saying she has "a

history of mental illness and has made previous false allegations." A judge granted the restraining order, which remains in effect until March 2018.

"The entire incident was a result of an accident. He had confronted her that she was cheating on him and she got violent," said Jerome Bradford, the attorney who represented Conyers in the criminal case.

"I believe what happened that night was a result of Mr. Conyers breaking up with her after he discovered she was being untrue," Bradford said. "I believe that that's what it is all about — a scorned woman."

A photo included in court records showed the wound, which appeared to be a few inches long and was stitched closed. The records also included photos of bruises, which the woman said came from being grabbed by Conyers in July 2016.

Conyers' girlfriend said he grabbed her and pushed her to the ground in the summer of 2016, though she said she fell, according to the woman's account in court documents. His girlfriend also said he put her in a headlock while he was driving in January and pulled her body across the passenger's side of the car while yelling at her.

Bradford said witnesses disputed the woman's allegations and he believed she "was exaggerating."

## House OKs GOP bill that widens gun owners' rights

BY MATTHEW DALY  
AND RICHARD LARDNER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans rammed a bill through the House on Wednesday that would make it easier for gun owners to legally carry concealed weapons across state lines, the first significant action on guns in Congress since mass shootings in Nevada and Texas killed more than 80 people.

The House approved the bill, 231-198, largely along party lines. Six Democrats voted yes, while 14 Republicans voted no.

The measure would allow gun owners with state-issued concealed-carry permits to carry handguns in any state that allows concealed weapons. It now goes to the Senate.

Republicans said the reciprocity measure, a top priority of the National Rifle Association, would allow gun owners to travel freely between states without worrying about conflicting state laws or civil suits.

Opponents, mostly Democrats, said the bill could endanger public safety by overriding state laws

that place strict limits on guns.

Rep. Elizabeth Esty, D-Conn., called the bill an attempt to undermine states' rights, to "hamstring law enforcement and to allow dangerous criminals to walk around with hidden guns anywhere and at any time. It's unspeakable that this is Congress' response to the worst gun tragedies in American history."

Esty represents Newtown, Conn., where 20 first-graders and six educators were fatally shot in 2012.

Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who was shot in the head in 2011, denounced the House action.

"I'm angry that when this country is begging for courage from our leaders, they are responding with cowardice," she said in a statement.

The NRA applauded the vote. The concealed-carry bill "is the culmination of a 30-year movement recognizing the right of all law-abiding Americans to defend themselves and their loved ones, including when they cross state lines," said Chris Cox, executive director of the group's political and lobbying arm.



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Dr. Kavita Patel, a practicing physician and policy expert at the Brookings Institution, talks Tuesday in Creve Coeur, Mo., about Medicaid programs.

## Study: Medicaid recipients cite poor health, high hopes

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — People on Medicaid are more prone to smoke, struggle with depression and obesity, or to rate their own health as fair or poor. But that's not the whole story.

A new study suggests that low-income Medicaid recipients also are invested in their health, with 4 out of 5 saying they have personal doctors, 3 out of 5 saying they eat healthily, and nearly half saying they exercise frequently.

Experts say the analysis for The Associated Press by the Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index indicates that Medicaid could gain by putting more emphasis on prevention and stressing better coordination of care. Such strategies are employed already by many workplace health plans and by Medicare.

Call it Medicaid's health care challenge.

A federal-state program originally envisioned as a safety net for poor families and severely disabled people, Medicaid has grown to cover about 1 in 5 Americans at a total cost of about \$600 billion annually. In states that expanded Medicaid under former President Barack Obama's health law, it's become the insurer for many low-income working adults. The Trump administration tried to unravel Obama's expansion, but top officials also have said they want to work to better the health of Medicaid beneficiaries, not just to pay medical bills.

"We now have emerging evidence in Medicare and commercial insurance of how care

coordination and prevention can help patients with chronic conditions avoid costly hospitalizations and ER visits," said Kavita Patel, a policy expert at the Brookings Institution who's also a practicing physician. "This really should become the standard across Medicaid programs."

In small town Stuttgart, Ark., Vickie Rose said Medicaid coverage is helping her try to quit smoking for good, which would entail shutting down a decades-long habit that once reached three packs per day.

"I'm not going to be able to stay out of hospitals if I don't take matters into my own hands," said Rose, who's in her early 60s and has worked jobs including factory supervisor, retail and staffing an animal shelter. Sometimes she travels 20 miles to the Mid-Delta community health center in neighboring Clarendon for smoking cessation meetings.

"Instead of waiting on everyone else, this time I'm going to do it for myself," said Rose.

Thirty-six percent of Medicaid recipients said they smoked in the Gallup-Sharecare study, compared with 13 percent of those with employer or union health insurance, and 16 percent of Medicare beneficiaries.

The Gallup-Sharecare survey interviews about 500 people per day on health care issues, yielding a trove of data. The new analysis for AP compared health indicators among people with different types of coverage.

In other findings: ■ Twenty-five percent of Medicaid beneficiaries said they are currently suffering from depres-

sion, compared with 7 percent of those with employer coverage.

■ Forty percent of people with Medicaid said they were in fair or poor health, compared with 11 percent of those in employer plans and 31 percent of those on Medicare.

■ Thirty-six percent of Medicaid beneficiaries said they are obese, compared with 28 percent of people in employer plans, and 30 percent of those with Medicare.

Still, survey director Dan Witters said, that's only half the story.

"Just because they smoke more doesn't mean that they don't have an interest in their health," Witters said of those with Medicaid.

In one counterintuitive finding, 81 percent of Medicaid recipients said they had personal doctors, about the same as 83 percent of those on employer plans. Because Medicaid pays less than private insurance or Medicare, a long-standing criticism is that beneficiaries might not be able to find doctors who'll see them. But most states now contract with private insurers to administer their programs, and those insurers must provide physician networks.

The Gallup-Sharecare results are based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 2-Nov. 5, with a random sample of 147,465 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and Washington.

For the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 1 percentage point. For Medicaid recipients, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.



## WORLD



VINICIA MAYO/AP

Supporters of independence for Catalonia gather near the European Union headquarters in Brussels on Thursday to protest what they see as the EU's failure to help them.

## Catalans, feeling abandoned by EU, take to the streets in Brussels

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Tens of thousands of people from Catalonia are rallying in Brussels to complain about what they see as the European Union's failure to help them following a failed independence referendum in the Spanish region.

Brussels police said Thursday that around 45,000 people attended the rally, which comes just two weeks ahead of regional elections in Catalonia.

Singing and chanting slogans, the throng marched

around the EU's main institutions, some draped in flags or carrying signs with "Shame on You" stamped over an EU flag.

Former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont was due to address the rally. He and four former Catalan government Cabinet members came to Brussels after the referendum, fearing arrest.

Many Catalans are pro-European, yet feel let down by the bloc's failure to mediate their conflict with Madrid.

## Why are N. Korean 'ghost ships' washing up on Japan's shores?

By ANNA FIFIELD

The Washington Post

TOKYO — Three more empty boats were found along Japan's west coast on Thursday, a day when the snow and the rain made sure the temperature never really rose above freezing. Two bodies reduced to skeletons were found near one, which was upturned on the shore near the city of Oga.

Another, much bigger boat, was found not far away. The third, bearing Korean writing, was caught in fishing nets near Sado Island, just off the west coast.

The previous day, an equally freezing Wednesday, a rickety old wooden boat which also bore a sign written in Korean was found bucking around in the rough seas. Two bodies were found nearby.

Another boat, mostly just bones, was found up the coast in Akita prefecture Tuesday, and before that, three bodies were found near a wooden boat. Two were wearing pins showing the face of Kim Il Sung, the "Eternal President" of North Korea.

Almost every day for the last month,

grisy discoveries like these have been made all along Japan's western coastline, across the sea from North Korea. One boat even had a slogan in Korean declaring, "September is a boat accident prevention month."

North Korean "ghost ships" had previously washed ashore from time to time, but the sudden spike over the last month — there were a record 28 in November, compared with only four the previous November, according to the coast guard — has many people here wondering what is going on? And does it tell us something about the state of North Korea?

Many analysts think it's a reflection of food shortages, which in turn are the result of tougher sanctions on North Korea imposed to punish the regime for its continued nuclear defiance.

"North Korean fishermen have to work harder than ever before and they have to go further out into the sea, but they don't have new boats," said Atsuhito Isozaki, associate professor of North Korean studies at Keio University.

Most of the boats washed up in Japan are about 32 feet long and wooden, so they

have trouble withstanding the rough winter seas. Many of the bodies are decomposed or just skeletons, likely a reflection of the storms and difficult seas in the area in October.

"Plus, North Korea doesn't have enough gasoline anymore so they're running out of fuel," Isozaki said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been aggressively promoting fishing as a growth industry and started this year by ordering a "dynamic drive for catching fish" with "modern fishing vessels."

North Korea's seafood exports to China grew by a whopping 75 percent between 2015 and 2016, according to figures from the South's trade promotion agency. This made it one of North Korea's biggest sources of revenue.

But in August, in response to the launch of North Korea's first intercontinental ballistic missiles, the U.N. Security Council banned seafood exports from the rogue state. The following month it slapped limits on the amount of refined petroleum products that could be exported to North Korea, all part of a strategy to make the regime think twice about pursuing nuclear weapons.

## Australia legalizes same-sex marriage

By ROB MCGURK

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia's Parliament voted Thursday to allow same-sex marriage across the nation following a bitter debate settled by a much-criticized government survey of voters that strongly endorsed change.

The public gallery in the House of Representatives applauded when the bill passed. It changes the definition of marriage from solely between a man and a woman to "a union of two people" excluding all others. The legislation passed with a majority that wasn't challenged, although five lawmakers registered their opposition.

The Senate passed the same legislation last week 43-12. After royal assent and other formalities, the law will likely take effect in about a month, with the first weddings expected a month later.

Champagne and tears flowed in the halls of Parliament House as gay celebrities, including Olympic champion swimmer Ian Thorpe and actress Magda Szubanski, hugged lawmakers and ordinary folk in a party atmosphere.

"What an amazing day. I'm a little bit delicious; it's extraordinary," said Szubanski, who sat in the public gallery during Thursday's daylong debate.

Thorpe thanked "our straight brothers and sisters" for strongly backing equality in the two-month postal survey.

"Quite literally without them voting for us, this would never have happened," Thorpe said.

"It means that we've created an Australia that is more equitable; it's more fair; it's more just," he added.

Amendments meant to safeguard freedoms of speech and re-

ligion for gay-marriage opponents were all rejected, though those issues may be considered later. The government has appointed a panel to examine how to safeguard religious freedoms once gay marriage is a reality in Australia.

Lawmakers advocating marriage equality had argued that the national postal survey in November mandated a change of the marriage definition alone, so changing the law should not be delayed by other considerations.

Gay marriage was endorsed by 62 percent of voters who responded to the postal ballot.

"It is now our job as members of Parliament to pass a fair bill that does not extend or create any new discriminations," an emotional government lawmaker Warren Entsch, who helped draft the bill, told Parliament. "It is a strong bill that already strikes the right balance between equality and freedom of religion."

Most advocates believed the government should have allowed marriages years ago and saw various ideas for a public survey as a delaying tactic. The U.N. Human Rights Committee had called the ballot survey "an unnecessary and divisive public opinion poll."

The current bill allows churches and religious organizations to boycott gay weddings without violating Australian anti-discrimination laws.

Existing civil celebrants can also refuse to officiate at gay weddings, but celebrants registered after gay marriage becomes law would not be exempt from anti-discrimination laws.

Veteran gay rights campaigner Rodney Croome said he expected the first same-sex weddings in Australia would not take place until February.

North Korea is reported to have sold the fishing rights along its coast to China so, to meet their quotas, North Koreans appear to be fishing illegally in the Yamato shallows, a rich fishing ground inside Japan's exclusive economic zone. If they run out of fuel, the strong northwesterly winds from China will blow them toward the Japanese coast.

Others say the increasing number of fishermen washing up in Japan might be evidence of food shortages in North Korea, with fishermen pushing themselves to extremes in search of a good catch.

The Mainichi Shimbun, a left-leaning Japanese newspaper, said that the sudden spurt in "ghost ships" showed the tyranny of the North Korean regime.

Not all the boats have contained corpses. A total of 42 men have been found alive, with one boatload of eight telling Japanese authorities they were looking for squid when their engine failed.

The arrival of North Koreans is causing jitters along the coastline, the same stretch of land from which Japanese citizens were abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s.

## WORLD

# Turkish leader's visit to Greece gets off to tense start

By ELENA BECATORIS  
Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — The first official visit by a Turkish president to Greece in six decades got off to a tense start Thursday, with Recep Tayyip Erdogan repeating comments that have alarmed his Greek hosts about the need to "update" the 1923 treaty that delineated the borders of modern Turkey.

Erdogan's first meeting was with Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and the televised discussions between the two men were visibly awkward.

The presidents engaged in a thinly veiled verbal spat over the treaty and the Muslim minority in northeastern Greece. Erdogan's two-day visit will include a trip Friday to meet with members of the community, who Greece recognizes only as a religious minority. The status of Greece's Muslims, whom Turkey considers a Turkish minority, also was determined by the 1923 treaty.

Erdogan rattled Greek officials by telling Greece's Skai television in an interview Wednesday night that the 1923 treaty should be "updated."

"In fact, all agreements in the

world should be updated with the passage of time," Erdogan said. "This update would be beneficial not only for Turkey but also for Greece."

His comment "raises serious concerns and questions," said government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos. "The Greek government and the prime minister want his visit to be a reason to build bridges, not to raise walls."

Respecting the treaty is "the exclusive and non-negotiable foundation on which the honest co-operation of the two countries can be built," Tzanakopoulos said.

But Erdogan reiterated his views on the treaty during his meeting Thursday with Pavlopoulos.

"This happened in Lausanne, that happened in Lausanne. I get that, but let's now quickly do what is necessary," he told the Greek president. "Many things have changed in 94 years. If we review these, I believe that all the sides will agree that so many things have to (change)."

Pavlopoulos told Erdogan the treaty "doesn't need revision or updating. It is valid as is."

He added the treaty didn't allow space for territorial disputes and clearly set out the status for Greece's Muslim minority.



Ciro Fusco, ANSA/AP

A man shows a pizza cooked Wednesday in the stone oven used in 1889 to make the first pizza Margherita in Naples, Italy.

## Naples celebrates UNESCO recognition of art of pizza

Associated Press

NAPLES, Italy — The city of Naples, often in headlines because of its garbage woes and mafia violence, is celebrating international recognition of its tastier side.

UNESCO on Thursday added the art of the Neapolitan pizza maker, or "pizzaiuolo," to its list of "intangible cultural heritage of humanity." Pizza making was one of dozens of traditional practices from around the world that got on

the U.N. cultural organization's list of "forms of expression" that are of importance to humanity.

Other winners this year were the ritual Kumbh Mela baths taken in India, Bosnian wood-carving, and the "Sega tambour" dance and song performances of Mauritius' Rodrigues Island.

In Naples, pizza makers celebrated the victory and planned to give away free pizza next week at a massive street party.

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Love,

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Dear Santa,

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Love,

Mary Jones

Dear Santa,

I am a boy and I like to play with my friends. I would like to have a new video game and a new book. I love you very much.

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Additional brands listed: Michael Kors, Lucky Brand, Chaps, Nautica, Kith, etc.

**3 Day Only Sale WOMEN**  
DECEMBER 15th-17th  
Excludes clearance

<b>SAVE 50%</b> Sweaters. MICHAEL KORS, Calvin Klein, MICHAEL KORS, MICHAEL KORS Plus. All women's coats, blouses and skirts.	<b>SAVE 40%</b> All women's and women's plus other apparel. MICHAEL KORS, Calvin Klein, MICHAEL KORS, MICHAEL KORS Plus. All women's coats, blouses and skirts.	<b>30% OFF</b> Select women's jeans. Columbia, MICHAEL KORS, Calvin Klein, MICHAEL KORS Plus. All women's coats, blouses and skirts.
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Additional brands listed: Michael Kors, Calvin Klein, MICHAEL KORS, MICHAEL KORS Plus, etc.

**3 Day Only Sale**  
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**\$500**  
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Valid at all military exchanges, participating facilities, [shopmyexchange.com](http://shopmyexchange.com) and [mytavyexchange.com](http://mytavyexchange.com). Every purchase you make with your MILITARY STAR card from November 1 - December 31, 2017, automatically counts as one entry. For alternate method of entry and complete details, see Official Rules at [MyECP.com/CustomerAds/Page/Exchange](http://MyECP.com/CustomerAds/Page/Exchange).

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Town's elf on a shelf has been returned

**NH** DEERFIELD — A New Hampshire town is happy to report that its beloved elf on a shelf has been returned, more than a day after he vanished.

The Deerfield Rescue Squad posted on Facebook on Wednesday morning that Zippy the elf is a little wet but safe. It featured photos of him carried by a police officer and parked in a car.

The rescue said "Our Holiday Magic is back."

Deerfield Rescue Squad EMS captain Cindy McHugh said a town resident was getting ready for work when he saw that Zippy was on his doorstep. He called police.

McHugh said the town isn't interested in pursuing the matter further, and just wants Zippy back for the children.

## Washington's bejeweled medal on display

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — A jewel-encrusted medal owned and worn by George Washington is going on display in Philadelphia for the first time since it was presented to Washington in the city 233 years ago.

The Diamond Eagle is the badge of office of the president general of the Society of the Cincinnati.

The organization was founded by officers of the Continental Army at the end of the Revolutionary War to preserve the revolution's memory.

The Eagle was presented to Washington by officers of the French Navy and designed by military engineer Pierre L'Enfant. It was fashioned in gold and silver and embedded with nearly 200 diamonds, emeralds and rubies.

It will be on view at the Museum of the American Revolution

## Sandwich shop to add axe throwing, beer

**WV** CHARLESTON — A sandwich shop in West Virginia's capital plans to expand next week to add craft beer and axe throwing.

Chadrick Harper, owner of the Lucky Dill Deli, told WSAZ-TV the addition will be called "Axes and Ales."

It's scheduled to start Thursday with five axe-throwing courts open Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.

You have to be 21 to play and get safety training.

It costs \$40 to reserve one court, separated from others by Plexiglas dividers, for one hour.

## 10 manatees rescued and taken to Florida

**SC** CHARLESTON — Wildlife officials have moved 10 manatees found near a warm water discharge pipe in a

## THE CENSUS

# \$50K

The amount a Connecticut family won in a national Christmas display competition. Daniel Amarante, of Killingly, said "Amarante's Winter Wonderland" won first place in Monday's season premiere of the ABC television show, "The Great Christmas Light Fight." The 22-year-old electrician said his display contains about 160,000 lights, 43 inflatables and 36 Christmas trees.



ALAN WARREN, THE (OWENSBORO, Ky.) MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

## A couple of swingers

Mason Howard, 2, swings with his father, Virgil, as they enjoy the warm weather Monday at Legion Park in Owensboro, Ky.

South Carolina coastal river back to their more traditional winter home in Florida.

SeaWorld officials said veterinarians checked each one of the manatees captured last week near the Kapstone Paper and Packaging mill on the Cooper River.

Officials told media outlets that nine of the manatees were released in Brevard County, Fla., while one manatee was kept at a zoo after showing signs of stress from the cold.

Manatees are migrating to Florida as the ocean water cools,

but sometimes the animals will stay in a warm pool of water and get trapped.

## State mulling a ban on flying drone while drunk

**NJ** TRENTON — New Jersey lawmakers are moving ahead with legislation that would make it illegal to operate a drone while drunk.

The legislation cleared an Assembly committee Monday and was up for a vote in the full Sen-

ate on Thursday.

The National Conference on State Legislatures said at least 38 states are considering drone legislation this year, going beyond the Federal Aviation Administration's regulations.

The bill specifically would make operating a drone under the influence of alcohol a disorderly persons offense, which carries a sentence of up to six months in prison, a \$1,000 fine or both. It also would make using a drone to hunt wildlife and endanger people or property a similar offense.



## Delta flight makes emergency bathroom stop

**MT** BILLINGS — A Delta flight from New York City to Seattle had to make an unplanned stop in Billings after the plane's toilets filled up and passengers couldn't hold it any longer.

The Billings Gazette reported that the direct flight diverted hundreds of miles south last weekend to make the emergency bathroom stop.

Delta said ground crews rolled a stairway to the airplane so passengers could "disembark to find relief of built-up pressures."

## Suspect falls through ceiling in front of officer

**PA** SCRANTON — A Pennsylvania man hiding from police in the crawl space of his girlfriend's home was taken into custody after he fell through the ceiling in front of an officer.

Police were searching the Scranton home for Justin Thompson, 29, who was wanted on charges of assault and harassment.

The (Scranton) Times-Tribune reported that officers found Thompson in the crawl space and tried to grab him. He was able to get away, but then plunged into the kitchen, where an officer was waiting.

## Woman drives with sign sticking out of her car

**NJ** SOUTH HACKENSACK — Police in New Jersey said a woman was drunk when she continued driving with a mass transit sign sticking out of the roof of her car.

The 52-year-old was pulled over Saturday on Route 46 in South Hackensack.

Police said the woman didn't know the sign was there.

The woman was charged with driving while intoxicated and careless driving.

## Man accused of illegally catching tuna, dumping it

**MA** GLOUCESTER — A Massachusetts man has been accused of catching a tuna out of season and then dumping its headless 400-pound carcass in the woods.

The Gloucester Daily Times reported that Harold Wentworth, 40, pleaded not guilty to state charges including improper disposal of waste and expelling trash or litter from a motor vehicle.

Federal fisheries regulators said they also served him with an enforcement action for allegedly illegally harvesting tuna out of season.

Authorities said they have video of Wentworth dumping the tuna 15 days after the close of the initial fall season.

From wire reports



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## BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Bitcoin firm hacked days before US exchange opens

By ELAINE KURTENBACH  
Associated Press

TOKYO — A bitcoin mining company in Slovenia has been hacked for the possible theft of tens of millions of dollars, just days before the virtual currency, which hit a new record above \$15,000 on Thursday, is due to start trading on major U.S. exchanges.

NiceHash, a company that mines bitcoins on behalf of customers, said it is investigating a security breach and will stop operating for 24 hours while it

verifies how many bitcoins were taken.

Research company CoinDesk said that a wallet address referred to by NiceHash users indicates that about 4,700 bitcoins had been stolen. At Thursday's record price of about \$15,000, that puts the value at over \$70 million.

There was no immediate response from NiceHash to an emailed request for more details.

"The incident has been reported to the relevant authorities and law enforcement and we are cooperating with them as a matter of urgency," it said. The state-

ment urged users to change their online passwords.

The hack will put a spotlight on the security of bitcoin just as the trading community prepares for the currency to start trading on two established U.S. exchanges. Futures for bitcoin will start trading on the Chicago Board Options Exchange on Sunday evening and on crosstown rival CME Group's platforms later in the month.

That has increased the sense among some investors that bitcoin is gaining in mainstream legitimacy after several countries, like China, tried to stifle the vir-

tual currency.

As a result, the price of bitcoin has jumped in the past year, particularly so in recent weeks. On Thursday it surged to over \$15,000, up \$1,300 in less than a day, according to CoinDesk. At the start of the year, one bitcoin was worth less than \$100.

Bitcoin is the world's most popular virtual currency. Such currencies are not tied to a bank or government and allow users to spend money anonymously. They are basically lines of computer code that are digitally signed each time they are traded.

A debate is raging on the merits of such currencies. Some say they serve merely to facilitate money laundering and illicit, anonymous payments. Others say they can be helpful methods of payment, such as in crisis situations where national currencies have collapsed.

Miners of bitcoins and other virtual currencies help keep the systems honest by having their computers keep a global running tally of transactions. That prevents cheaters from spending the same digital coin twice.

Online security is a vital concern for such dealings.

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 8)	\$1.2099
Dollar buys (Dec. 8)	€0.8265
British pound (Dec. 8)	\$1.37
Japanese yen (Dec. 8)	¥109.00
South Korean won (Dec. 8)	₩1,064.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.5719
Canada (Dollar)	1.3385
China (Yuan)	6.1995
Denmark (Krone)	6.31
Egypt (Pound)	17.8088
Euro	\$1.1794/0.8479
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8076
Hungary (Forint)	367.07
Israel (Shekel)	3.2156
Japan (Yen)	112.66
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3021
Norway (Krone)	8.2822
Philippines (Peso)	50.63
Poland (Zloty)	3.57
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7510
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3505
South Korea (Won)	1,062.46
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9919
Thailand (Baht)	32.62
Turkey (Lira)	1.8664
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom or nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

## MARKET WATCH

Dec. 6, 2017

Dow Jones Industrials	-39.73
Nasdaq composite	14.17
Standard & Poor's 500	-0.30
Russell 2000	-7.88

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.00
Discount rate	1.75
Federal funds market rate	1.16
3-month bill	1.29
30-year bond	2.71

## Walmart changing its legal name as it shifts online

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is changing its legal name effective Feb. 1 as it shifts away from physical stores in the age of Amazon's increasing dominance.

The world's largest retailer, based in Bentonville, Ark., said Wednesday it will change its legal name to Walmart Inc. from Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

It said the move underscores its growing emphasis on serving shoppers in different ways beyond just physical stores but also online, on their mobile devices and through pickup and delivery.

The company has been making inroads in narrowing the gap be-

tween itself and Amazon by making big investments in its online business. It tripled the number of items sold online from a year ago, overhauled its free shipping strategy and is expanding such services as allowing shoppers to pick up online grocery orders curbside at the stores. That has helped drive strong e-commerce sales gains in the past several quarters, most recently 50 percent growth in its fiscal third quarter.

Walmart operates more than 11,600 stores and clubs under 60 different banners worldwide.

"Whether it's in our stores, on

our sites, with our apps, by using their voice or whatever comes next, there is just one Walmart as far as our customers are concerned," wrote Doug McMillon, Walmart president and CEO, in a blog post Wednesday.

The discounter's formal legal name when it incorporated on Oct. 31, 1969, was Wal-Mart Inc. It was changed to Wal-Mart Stores Inc. on Jan. 9, 1970, the same year it went public.

It will continue to trade on the New York Stock Exchange as "WMT." It's been using the current Walmart logo in its opera-

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.049	--	\$2.959
Change in price	--	-3.0 cents	--	No change
Okinawa	\$2.529	\$2.959	--	--
Change in price	-4.0 cents	--	--	No change
South Korea	\$2.569	\$2.849	\$3.079	\$2.989
Change in price	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	-1.0 cents
Guam	\$2.569**	\$3.339	\$3.079	--
Change in price	-3.0 cents	-4.0 cents	-3.0 cents	--

\* Diesel EFD \*\* Midgrade  
For the week of Dec. 9-15

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

## FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## FRIDAY IN EUROPE



## SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

# WEEKEND



## WRAPPED and ready

Dave Barry rounds up  
the stuff a good Santa  
would never send in  
the 2017 Gift Guide

Pages 24-26

# WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS



GOOGLE/TNS

Google hopes its "Coding for Carrots" game encourages kids to code.

## Getting kids into coding

By FIZA PIRANI  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

To celebrate 50 years since kids programming languages were first introduced, Google created a special Google Doodle "Coding for Carrots" game directed at kids to get them excited and engaged about coding.

The doodle game, developed by the Google Doodle team, Google Blockly team and researchers from MIT Scratch, involves a 6-level quest in which players help a furry rabbit gather carrots by popping together coding blocks.

It's based on MIT's Scratch programming language for kids.

Want more ways to get your child excited about programming? Here are a few resources:

### Scratch

Scratch is part of MIT's Lifelong Kindergarten Lab. It's best suited for kids ages 8-16.

The free programming language lab, which uses a building-block interface, features tutorials, curriculums for parents, offline printable cards to learn Scratch off screen and more.

Online: scratch.mit.edu

### Kodable

Kodable is a free, web-based app (compatible with iPad) available for free on iOS.

Advertised as "computer science made with love," Kodable features easy programming lessons aimed at kindergartners to fifth graders, an award-winning curriculum for new kid coders.

Rated 4.5 on iTunes.

### Blockly

Kids older than 10 years might find Blockly, Google's refinement of Scratch, better suited for learning code. Though Blockly isn't as fully developed as Scratch, it can output multiple different programming languages, including JavaScript, Python, PHP and more.

You can also see the code as you link blocks together in each game, allowing you to watch as languages and their syntax change for a given program.

Online: developers.google.com/blockly

### Daisy the Dinosaur

This free iOS app features fun mini games designed to teach kids in kindergarten through third grade the basics of programming. It's compatible with iPad.

Using a list of commands (turn, grow, roll, etc.), kids can direct Daisy the Dino around the screen. In challenge mode, players are only given a limited number of command pieces and have to figure out how to complete the given task using them.

Available at itunes.com.

ON THE COVER: Dave Barry, dressed as Santa, models the Eagle Briefs, one of the items from the 2017 Dave Barry Gift Guide.

CARL JUSTE, MIAMI HERALD/TNS

## GADGET WATCH

### Make sure everything measures up with this tool

By GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

It looks like a pen, it's the size of a pen, but it is way more than a pen. And that's an understatement after seeing how cool and innovative the InstruMMENT 01 is when paired with a smartphone. After playing with the tool for a little while, I got the hang of how to use it as a measuring and dimensioning instrument, with the results processed on my smartphone quicker than I would be able to write them down.

The InstruMMENT shows a demonstration on how you measure curves for an incredibly accurate measurement of a mouse and have the dimensions relayed to the accompanying app (Android and iOS) instantly. So instantly that's what I did and say what you want, I thought it was pretty cool, I could see how designers, architects, and other professionals would make this tool a game changer right out of the box.

This all happens because a bunch of sensors built inside take the measurements and relay them wirelessly (Bluetooth) to your smartphone. It works as a tape measure so builders can use it to calculate length, width or height for door space, walls, windows, floors or how much carpet is needed. Or as demonstrated on the website, you can measure a growing child instantly and record their height in the app. The uses are really endless for measuring anything flat or 3-D.

Setup with the app is simple; just pair it and go. You can view measurements in any unit you want — inches, feet, yards, miles or metric.

The InstruMMENT 01 is constructed with an aluminum body and is available in pen, pencil or stylus versions, all built with internal sensors and Bluetooth. A six-month battery is included along with an ink cartridge; replacements can be purchased.

Other accessories you can add include leather sleeves, stylus tips and even training wheels, which I certainly could have used.

Online: instrumments.com; \$149 for the dimensioning instrument with a pen, pencil or stylus (choose one)

The company behind Nora, a device designed to combat snoring, claims that 40 percent of Americans snore, causing many problems in the bedroom and often leading to health problems including strokes and heart attacks.

Full disclosure: I'm a horrible sleeper, and my snoring often keeps my wife awake. Over the years I've tried mouth guards, medications, nose strips, etc., so I, like other poor sleepers, am willing to try anything.

The rechargeable Nora was a pleasant surprise. My wife and I agreed that the product worked for me. The hardware and setup are simple. The Nora device has a built-in microphone and looks like a computer mouse. It can sit on your nightstand and works with an ex-



INSTRUMENTS/TNS

It looks like a pen, it's the size of a pen, but the InstruMMENT 01 is far more than a pen. The tool measures dimensions with pinpoint accuracy and sends them to your smartphone.

pander wirelessly (via Bluetooth), which slides into your existing pillowcase.

Just tap Nora when you get in bed, and Nora detects when you are snoring, then tells the expander to slightly inflate and gently move your head. The expander has low/high settings, which expand less or more, depending on what you feel is needed. The expander is connected to an AC-powered pack, which also works on battery power for up to three nights when traveling.

It works for back, side or stomach sleepers; the only requirement is that your head is on the pillow. Snoring issues are often (not always) controlled by positioning, and the expander did well. You can also set the Nora with a delay, giving you time to fall asleep before it's activated. The soon-to-be-released iOS Nora app will help over time to record patterns, show you what times during the night snoring was an issue and record results on what's working and what isn't.

Online: smartnora.com; \$299 with a 30-day money-back guarantee

The Jabra Elite 25e has the great sound you would expect from Jabra. I've never tried a headset from them that wasn't impressive.

One thing I've found with the influx of neckband wireless earbud systems is that the battery life is poor. Jabra bucks the trend with an impressive battery time of up to 18 hours.

The product's bendable neckband is comfortable. I didn't even remember that it was there. The 10mm speakers with Jabra EarGels (three sets included; S/M/L) are connected at each end. From there, just make a call or turn up your music.

They have a wind-protected microphone, dust and water resistance and charge with the included USB cable. Controls even allow for one-touch access to voice assistants.

Online: Jabra.com; \$79.99

## ITUNES MUSIC

The top 10 songs on iTunes for the week ending Nov. 30:

1. "Havana" (feat. Young Thug), Camila Cabello
2. "Perfect," Ed Sheeran
3. "rockstar" (feat. 21 Savage), Post Malone
4. "MIC Drop" (feat. Designer) (Steve Aoki Remix), BTS
5. "Thunder," Imagine Dragons
6. "Total Eclipse of the Heart," Chlöe Kohanski
7. "Bad at Love," Halsey
8. "Meant to Be" (feat. Florida Georgia Line), Bebe Rexha
9. "Too Good at Goodbyes," Sam Smith
10. "Wolves," Selena Gomez & Marshmello

— Compiled by AP

## SPOTIFY MUSIC

The top 10 songs on Spotify through Dec. 5:

1. "rockstar," Post Malone
2. "Havana," Camila Cabello
3. "Perfect Duet" (Ed Sheeran and Beyoncé), Ed Sheeran
4. "New Rules," Dua Lipa
5. "Wolves," Selena Gomez & Marshmello
6. "Perfect," Ed Sheeran
7. "Too Good at Goodbyes," Sam Smith
8. "Gucci Gang," Lil Pump
9. "Let You Down," NF
10. "What Lovers Do" (feat. SZ), Maroon 5

— Compiled by Stars and Stripes

## ITUNES MOVIES

The top 10 movies on iTunes for the week ending Dec. 5:

1. "Kingsman: The Golden Circle"
2. "Trolls Holiday"
3. "Logan Lucky"
4. "The Hitman's Bodyguard"
5. "Aloic Blonde"
6. "El" (2003)
7. "Wind River"
8. "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets"
9. "Despicable Me 3"
10. "The Little Hours"

— Compiled by AP



## VIDEO GAMES

Game Informer Magazine ranks the Top 10 games for December:

1. "Super Mario Odyssey," Switch
2. "PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds," Xbox One, PC
3. "Divinity: Original Sin 2," PC
4. "Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus," PS4, Xbox One, PC
5. "Assassin's Creed Origins," PS4, Xbox One, PC
6. "South Park: The Fractured But Whole," PS4, Xbox One, PC
7. "Fortnite," PS4, Xbox One, PC
8. "Destiny 2," PS4, Xbox One, PC
9. "Call of Duty: WWIII," PS4, Xbox One, PC
10. "Pokémon Ultra Sun & Ultra Moon," 3DS

— Compiled by TNS

## APPS

The top paid iPhone apps for the week ending Dec. 3:

1. Heads Up!
2. Minecraft
3. kirakira+
4. Flague Inc.
5. Monument Valley 2
6. Bloons TD 5
7. Schedule
8. NBA 2K18
9. Facelifts
10. Trivia Crack (No Ads)

— Compiled by AP



## WEEKEND

# CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time



USA Network

"Psych: The Movie" reunites Dule Hill, left, and James Roday as shyster psychic detectives.

# 1

## Comedic duo returns for 'Psych' TV movie

Fans of "Psych," the USA Network's wacky series about fake psychic detectives, have a special holiday treat this weekend. Actors Dule Hill and James Roday have reunited for a two-hour TV movie that has them pursuing another case through the streets of San Francisco.

The duo find the same offbeat chemistry that forged the show a solid fan base for eight seasons from 2006-2014. It's probably safe to bet that a pineapple will be involved somehow.

- **'Psych: The Movie'** airs Friday on AFN-Spectrum.
- **Q&A with actors Roday and Hill** on Page 43.

# 2

## U2 back in a big way

"Joshua Tree" nostalgia tour aside, U2 has had a rough go of things in recent years. Through an album release fiasco, the iconic band has seen better days. The release of "Songs of Experience," however, should show that the Irish crew has found its groove again. From ballad to breakup song to anthems, the band, and the album's tracks, feel fully integrated and alive.

- **Review on Page 37.**



LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Bono and U2 have returned to relevance with their latest album, "Songs of Experience."

# 3

## New holiday albums abound

December means the release of a new batch of mostly established holiday favorites. This year, a wide variety of singers are pumping out classic tunes, and a few brave artists are writing new ones. Sia has released "Everyday Is Christmas," highlighting her prodigious songwriting skills with fresh songs that range from cute to touching. Smokey Robinson, Gwen Stefani and even Elvis Presley also have holiday treats to share with music lovers.

- **Read more on Pages 36-37.**



# 4

## DMX's official 'Rudolph' track an instant classic

Rapper DMX has given new life to the song about that famous red-nosed reindeer.

The "Party Up (Up In Here)" and "X Gon' Give It To Ya" star's left-field take on the classic Johnny Marks track comes following a viral video of DMX rapping the song, which took the internet by storm back in 2012. It's since racked up more than 4 million views on YouTube. Five years later, he's made the track official as part of Spotify's new "Singles: Christmas" playlist. Check out the original viral video, and the new recorded version, below.

- **Find the new version on [spotify.com](https://open.spotify.com/track/1a2b3c4d5e6f7g8h9i0j).**
- **Original version: [tinyurl.com/canny6z](https://tinyurl.com/canny6z).**



## WEEKEND: DAVE BARRY GIFT GUIDE 2017



PHOTOS BY CARL JUSTE, MIAMI HERALD/TN3

The Lightsaber BBQ Tongs (above and below) are one of the many out-of-this-world items (by which we mean, you'll wonder what alien race thought they were reasonable products) on the 2017 Dave Barry Gift Guide.

# gifts you'll have to **FORCE** others to accept

From Lightsaber BBQ Tongs to a toilet game to insulting bandages, Dave Barry's crack crew of gift-finders and testers have done it again: They found the very best, but gave us this junk instead.



BY DAVE BARRY ■ Miami Herald

The holiday season is all about traditions, but these traditions differ from country to country around the world.

For example:

- In Denmark, it's traditional, on Christmas Eve, to fill a bathtub with oatmeal.
- In Russia, rural families observe the holidays by dressing a live sturgeon as a dental hygienist.
- In Bolivia, children place their shoes next to the fireplace at bedtime; when they fall asleep, the parents sneak out of the house and check into a resort hotel for several weeks.

These are just a few of the colorful international traditions that serve to remind us, as Americans, how weird foreign people are.

Of course we have holiday traditions, too, but ours are normal:

- Our retail stores let us know that the holidays are here by putting up festive holiday decorations shortly after Labor Day.
- Our radio stations remind us of the true meaning of the season by playing sacred holiday songs such as "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer."
- Starbucks introduces a specialty seasonal coffee beverage containing a mutant holiday ingredient such as giblets (the Turkey-spresso).
- And in an endless parade of TV commercials, sellers of auto-mobiles, jewelry, liquor, power tools, etc., urge us, in the true spirit of the season, to give money to the poor.

Ha ha! That last one was of course a joke. In fact these companies urge us to purchase their products. Because in the end, the most important holiday tradition of all is of buying things whether anybody needs them or not.

And when you're talking about things that nobody needs, you're talking about our annual Holiday Gift Guide. People constantly say to us: "Your Holiday Gift Guide is amazing! How do you do it?" We never answer these people, because they are imaginary. But they make a valid point: This is no ordinary gift guide. This guide is the result of literally tens of minutes of effort by our staff, which combs the internet with an actual comb, looking for unique gift items that you will not find in any other gift guide, at least not one with standards.

All of the items in our Holiday Gift Guide are real. We purchased all of them and subjected them to our rigorous five-step quality-control procedure:

STEP ONE: We receive the item.

STEP TWO: We remove the item from its packaging.

STEP THREE: We take a picture of the item.

STEP FOUR: We put the item back into its packaging.

STEP FIVE: We wash our hands thoroughly.

It is because of this rigorous procedure that we are able to offer our Holiday Gift Guide Money Back Guarantee: If you purchase one of these gift items, and for any reason you are dissatisfied, simply send the item to us along with \$500 cash for processing, and if there is any money left over after we are done processing, you can have it back, although this frankly seems unlikely.

Here's what "made the cut" for the 2017 Holiday Gift Guide:

## WEEKEND: DAVE BARRY GIFT GUIDE 2017



PHOTOS BY CARL JUSTE, MIAMI HERALD/TNS

The PortoVino Purse is great for all the occasions for which drinking wine on the go is appropriate.

### PortoVino Wine Purse

\$74.95 plus shipping from Amazon.com

— Suggested by Jon Harris  
of Christiansburg, Va.

Here's the perfect gift for the fashionable lady on your holiday list who, for whatever totally innocent and legal reason, needs to carry a large hidden supply of wine. This is a stylish purse with a secret reservoir inside that can hold two

bottles of wine, connected to a discreet spout on the outside for easy pouring.

This purse is a "must-have" fashion accessory for business meetings, parent-teacher conferences, funerals, Little League games, congressional testimony — anywhere you might feel a sudden need to drink two bottles of wine. We are not saying that Queen Elizabeth II has a purse like this. But we are not saying that she doesn't.



Your favorite male fashionista might be thrilled to receive a suitably hip "Man Bun" Ken doll.

### 'Man Bun' Ken Doll

\$17.84 plus shipping from Amazon.com (prices may vary)

Here's a fun toy for the youngster on your holiday gift list who enjoys playing with dolls that are hep with the latest fashions. This is a Ken doll, but instead of the usual "square" Ken hairstyle, this Ken is sporting a "man bun" of the type that is highly popular among fashion-conscious men still living in the year 2015.

To complete his look, "Man Bun" Ken is wearing "distressed" jean shorts and a facial expression that says, "Can you believe how trendy I am?" Meanwhile Barbie is making out with Skeleto.

### Toilet Trouble Game

\$15.99 plus shipping from Amazon.com

— Suggested by Cindy K.  
of Shelby, N.C.

Nothing says "family fun" like a malfunctioning commode. That's the theory behind this hilarious game. Players take turns spinning the toilet paper roll, which tells them how many times they must flush the toilet. Usually the toilet just makes a flushing sound, but sometimes — this is the hilarious part — the toilet sprays water on the player. At least we hope it's just water. The fun continues until there's only one dry player, who is the winner. Then it's time for another round of... Toilet Trouble! Or you could break out the vodka. We are not judging your family.



The Toilet Trouble game delivers all the fun of a broken potty to your family game night.

### 'Songs to Make Dogs Happy' Album

\$19.95 plus shipping and handling from Laurel Canyon Animal Company; laurelcanyonanimalcompany.com

Here's the perfect gift for the "four-legged friend" on your list. This is a collection of 12 songs written and performed by humans specifically for dogs. The songs, most of which are in a musical genre we would describe as "peppy," include such titles as "Squeaky Deaky," "You're a Good Dog," "Outside," "Scratch My Back," "I Love Food," "I'll Be Back" and "Cookies."

Do these songs actually make dogs happy? To answer that question, we conducted a scientific experiment: We played this album for Lucy, who is the Official Dog of the Holiday Gift Guide, and observed her reactions. Her main reaction was to cock her head toward the speaker during the part of "Squeaky Deaky" when you can hear a squeaky toy squeaking. Other than that one part of that one song, Lucy did not appear to be paying attention to the album, but there was no way to know for certain. It might have been making her happy. You can never really tell with Lucy.

By way of a scientific "control" for our experiment, we also had Lucy listen to "Game of Love," the 1965 hit by Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders. Lucy did not appear to pay attention to that song, either. For the record — and we view this as an oversight on the part of Wayne Fontana, as well as the Mindbenders — "Game of Love" does not feature a squeaky toy.

In conclusion, if somebody on your holiday gift list would like an album of peppy songs that might or might not make dogs happy, this might or might not be the ideal gift for that person. And we stand behind that statement.



The "Songs to Make Dogs Happy" album might or might not actually delight your favorite canine friend.



### Lightsaber BBQ Tongs

\$27.99 plus shipping from Amazon.com

Have you ever wondered what Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, Yoda and other inhabitants of the Star Wars universe do when they want to relax? The answer is, they have backyard barbecues,

just like you! The only difference is, they use these special lightsaber tongs, which work just like regular barbecue tongs, except that, in addition to being able to manipulate hamburgers and hot dogs, they can kill whomever they touch. We recommend that you read the directions carefully.

### Kitchen Safe

\$54.90 plus shipping from Amazon.com

— Suggested by George Perera  
of Miami

This is the ideal gift to give when you want to express the joyful holiday message: "You could stand to lose" some weight."

This is a plastic food container with a lock and a timer. Let's say



you have some fudge, and you don't want to eat any more, but you lack the willpower to stop yourself. You simply put the fudge in the safe, set the timer for the interval you want (it can be one minute to 10 days) and press the lock button. Now your fudge is totally secure, because the safe cannot be opened until the time is up, unless you get a blunt instrument and bash the safe open, which you will do within minutes, because, come on, it's FUDGE.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



# WEEKEND: DAVE BARRY GIFT GUIDE 2017

FROM PAGE 25

## Barry Manilow Coloring Book

\$12.99 (free shipping) from [shopmanilow.com/barry-manilow-coloring-book](http://shopmanilow.com/barry-manilow-coloring-book)

—Suggested by Jack Brown of Grand Rapids, Mich.

There are many things wrong with today's young people. They pay extra for jeans that look like they have been attacked by rabid moths. They stick metal things through their noses. They constantly take pictures of themselves. They call people "salty." They live with their parents until age 37. The list of their flaws is endless. But without question one of the worst things about young people is their hideous taste in music, what with their "rap" tunes and their "hard metal."

If you have a musically misguided young person on your holiday list, we have the perfect gift for him or her: The Barry Manilow Coloring Book. We got it from the official website of Barry Manilow, and it is everything you'd hope it would be, assuming you'd hope it would be a book of photographs of Barry Manilow that have been converted to faded line art so you can sort of color them in.

Imagine the look on some lucky young person's face when he or she unwraps this item, along with a pack of crayons (not included) and you say: "If you think this Barry Manilow coloring book is exciting, just wait until you hear his music!" Then you turn on your stereo system (not included), and the room fills with the scintillating sounds of "Copacabana" or one of the many other Barry Manilow hits from the past two centuries. Pretty soon, that young person will develop an appreciation for good music. Either that, or that young person will move out of your house. Either way is good.



## Sexy Chest Swimsuit

\$49 plus shipping and handling from [BelovedShirts.com](http://BelovedShirts.com)

—Suggested by Ralph Kirshtner of New Hampton, N.H.

This is the perfect gift for the lady on your holiday list who would like to "make a splash" at the beach or pool. This is a woman's one-piece bathing suit with a high-definition graphic print on the front that looks like the bare chest and belly of a hairy male. The effect is to create a unique fashion "look" that is bound to make the woman wearing this suit the center of attention. Quite possibly from the police.

**The Sexy Chest Swimsuit will turn heads wherever you wear it.**

PHOTOS BY CARL JUSTE, MIAMI HERALD/TNS

## Gun and Target Recordable Alarm Clock

\$20.38 plus shipping from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) (price may vary)

We've all done it. We are awakened by the annoying sound of an alarm, we lose our temper, we grab a pistol or assault rifle and we fire up to 17 shots into the clock radio to make it stop. Yes, it's satisfying. But it wastes ammunition, and it could cause serious, even fatal, harm to a perfectly good home appliance.

Well, now there is a better way to wake up, and that way is this gun and target recordable alarm clock. It's "recordable" because you can record your own wake-up song. At the preset alarm time, your song will start playing, and a target will pop up on the clock. You can then use the included gun to shoot at the target; if you hit it, the alarm goes into "snooze" mode. Ha ha! What a fun morning you are having!



**Gun and Target Recordable Alarm Clock will make users earn that snooze alarm.**

You can also use the included gun to protect yourself from home invaders, assuming they have a "snooze" mode.



## Finger Hand Puppets

\$6.97 plus shipping from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

Here's a great gift for a person who would like to add some "pizzazz" to his or her hand gestures. This is a set of five tiny rubber hands that they slip on over your regular fingers. So now, when you hold up your hand, you are actually holding up five little hands! Think of the many practical uses of this gift. Seriously, think of them, and let us know what they are.



## Men's 3-D Eagle Boxer Briefs

\$3.95 plus shipping from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

It is an unfortunate fact that many males today are wearing boring ho-hum underwear that does not make a bold statement. If you know such a male, then this is the ideal gift for him. These briefs have an image of the head of a fierce-looking eagle on the front, with a "3-D effect" beak sticking out pretty much where you would expect. There is no mistaking the message sent by the man wearing these briefs, namely: "There is an eagle on myrotch."

You can also get these briefs with a wolf's head, but frankly that would look ridiculous.



## Shakespearean Insult Bandages

\$7.06 plus shipping from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

Every now and then, here at the Holiday Gift Guide, we come across an item so unusual that we ask ourselves, "How did they come up with this idea, and did it involve narcotics?"

That was our reaction to these Shakespearean insult bandages. These are normal adhesive bandages, except that they are imprinted with insults written by the late William Shakespeare. So let's imagine a scenario wherein you have (1) a minor

flesh wound and (2) an annoying co-worker named Bob. You simply put your Shakespearean insult bandage over your wound, go to work, and, when Bob does something annoying, you display your bandage, and he reads a classic Shakespearean "zinger" such as: "Thy wit's as thick as Tewksbury mustard." Ha ha! That would certainly put Bob in his place, assuming he knows anything about Tewksbury mustard! Seriously, those must have been strong narcotics.



## Banana Surprise Yumstation

\$6 plus shipping from [eBay.com](http://eBay.com) (also available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com))

—Suggested by Bob and Judy Pert of New Brunswick, Canada, and Janice Gelb of Melbourne, Australia

Do you have somebody on your holiday list who would enjoy nothing more than turning an ordinary banana into a banana with syrup inside it via a laborious process? If so, this is the gift for that person.

The Banana Surprise Yumstation is a kit containing various tools for preparing the banana,

and a set of instructions totaling 10 steps. These include placing the banana in the Yumstation, inserting a "coring tube" into the banana to remove its core, removing the core from the coring tube with another tool, and using a squeeze bottle to fill the interior of the hollowed-out banana with a flavoring such as chocolate syrup.

Perhaps you are thinking: Why go to all that trouble? Why not just put syrup on the banana?

It's people like you who make us wonder why we even bother to create this Gift Guide.

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

## Europe



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Visitors to the Archaeology Museum in Frankfurt, Germany, look at items on display at the temporary "Gods of the Etruscans" exhibit, which runs through Feb. 4. The museum's collections span many millennia, from prehistory to the Early Middle Ages.



This piece of gold jewelry depicting a male head was found in northern Iran and dates to late 2nd century or early 1st century B.C.



A buckle, probably from the belt of a Frankish warrior. It depicts the head of Christ to prove the warrior's piety.



A gold pectoral cross from the 7th to 10th century.

# TREASURES OF ANTIQUITY

## Collection at Frankfurt museum spans centuries

By MICHAEL ABRAMS  
Stars and Stripes

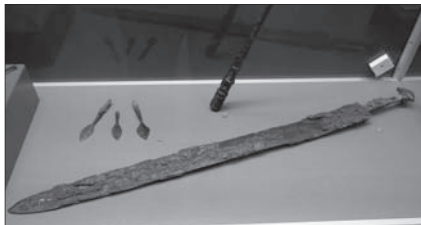
**F**rankfurt is a city of many museums. A stretch of the Main River embankment is even named after the row of museums there.

But there are others scattered through town and one of them, tucked away in a former Carmelite monastery, is full of ancient treasures.

The Archaeology Museum started as a department of the city's Historical Museum in the late 19th century. The department moved a couple of times as it grew and finally became a museum of its own. Located in the monastery and its newer extensions since 1969, it has been officially called the Archäologisches Museum since 2002.

Its collections span many millennia, from prehistory to the Early Middle Ages.

The prehistory section has artifacts from the Stone Age through the Iron Age; the oldest item on display is a flint hand ax. Most of the objects here were discovered in finds from Neolithic settlements around Frankfurt. The grave of an early Celtic chieftain is a collection highlight.



A sword and arrowheads found in the grave of a 6th-century man in central Germany is on display at the Archaeology Museum.

Indeed, many of the things on display here were found in Frankfurt and its surroundings. The ancient Orient collection is an exception. That collection is quite extensive, with a floor of its own in a wing of the museum. On display are finds mostly from Iran, Syria and Anatolia. They include weapons, exquisite gold jewelry and ceramics, including a lamp or bowl shaped like a bat.

The floor below houses the classical antiquity section. Here artifacts from the Greek, Mycenaean and Etruscan cultures are on display. The collection shows how far-flung trade in Europe

was, even 2,500 years ago, with most of these Mediterranean artifacts found in the Frankfurt area.

That the Romans were once in the area is well-known. The reconstructed Saalburg, a Roman fort, stands in the nearby Taunus mountains, and the remnants of Nida, a Roman town, have been excavated in neighboring Heddernheim.

So it's no surprise that the Roman section makes up the museum's largest collection. Housed in the former monastery's church, it features tall, graceful columns honoring the Roman

For more photos of artifacts at the The Archaeologisches Museum Frankfurt, go to [stripes.com/go/archaeology](http://stripes.com/go/archaeology)



god Jupiter, an altar dedicated to the cult of Mithras and helmets, armor and weapons.

The museum's final section is dedicated to the Alemannia and the Franks. Most of the artifacts here are from a series of graves found near Frankfurt-Harheim. Those graves contained jewelry, weapons and food and gifts for the dead.

Among the most intriguing finds was the grave of a Frankish girl, buried under the Frankfurt Cathedral. Undoubtedly the child of someone of importance, she was buried with vessels, golden rings, golden bracelets, a necklace and a small ornate container.

The museum also hosts temporary exhibits, and until Feb. 4, visitors can see the fascinating show "Gods of the Etruscans." It features items from the museum's own collections but relies heavily on pieces from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Florence and the Museo Etrusco Guarnacci in Volterra, Italy.

[abrams.mike@stripes.com](mailto:abrams.mike@stripes.com)

## ON THE QT

### DIRECTIONS

The Archaeologisches Museum Frankfurt is at Karmelitergasse 1, 60311 Frankfurt am Main. In downtown Frankfurt, the nearest parking garages are Dom and Hauptwache. The closest public transportation stop is Willy-Brandt-Platz, where subway lines U1 to U5 and U8 and tram lines 11 and 12 stop.

### TIMES

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays-Sundays; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays. Closed Mondays and Dec. 24, 25 and 31.

### COSTS

Admission is 7 euros for adults; children under 18 enter for free. The museum is free for all on the last Saturday of the month. Expect to pay about 2 euros per hour for parking.

### FOOD

There are beverage and vending machines in the museum's small cafe, but restaurants of all types are nearby.

### INFORMATION

Website: [archaeologisches-museum.frankfurt.de](http://archaeologisches-museum.frankfurt.de). Click on the British flag for the English-language version.

—Michael Abrams

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe

## Three of Europe's most scenic journeys

Sometimes in travel, the journey is the reward. And that is particularly true in Europe, where trains, buses and boats link destinations near and far, high and low, urban and rural, often through spectacular scenery.

One of my favorite journeys is called Norway in a Nutshell, a series of coordinated bus, train and ferry rides that connects the cities of Oslo and Bergen—all while weaving its way through Norway's fjord country to show off the full tapestry of its scenic grandeur.

The journey starts with a five-hour train ride from Oslo to a high-mountain station called Myrdal. This is simply the most spectacular train ride in northern Europe. The scenery crescendos as you climb over the crest of Norway's mountainous midlands. After a mild three hours of deep woods and lakes, you're treated at last to the glaciers and barren tundra of the Norwegian highland. At Myrdal, a super-scenic tourist train takes you down to the fjordside hamlet of Flam, winding past waterfalls and through 20 tunnels in 55 thrilling minutes.

Flam is the departure point for the two-hour ferry ride on two breathtaking fjords to the village of Gudvangen. As you cruise through the world's narrowest fjord, you'll feel the mist falling from black cliffs high above and—especially on a sunny day—the hillsides appear to be within arm's reach. From Gudvangen, a bus zips you through the mountains to the town of Voss, where you'll board a train to your destination, Bergen, a less impressive but still picturesque finale to the tour.

If any country rivals Norway when it comes to the sheer range of amazing scenery and efficient transportation, it's

Switzerland. While most train rides in Switzerland are photogenic, four are aggressively marketed as the most spectacular. Of those, my pick is the Golden Pass.

This route cuts a swath diagonally across the pristine center of the country, connecting Luzern with Lake Geneva. The five-hour journey has three segments with two transfers. Some of the trains offer panoramic cars with huge windows that curve back into the roof of the train car, allowing for views of high mountains from a wider angle.

My favorite part is the two-hour trip between Zweisimmen and Montreux. Those who reserve a VIP seat in the first car enjoy an unobstructed view of pristine alpine scenery.

Leaving Zweisimmen, the train rolls through varied landscapes, starting in the German-speaking region before entering French Switzerland. With the change in language comes a change in culture and architecture. French-style stone houses start to replace half-timbered, woody, German-style chalets.

At one point, the train surges through Jaman Tunnel, engulfing you in nearly two miles of darkness. When you emerge, you're in another world, leaving the feudal Middle Ages and entering the 19th-century belle époque. The train



Courtesy of ricksteves.com

The Norway in a Nutshell route is one of the prettiest train rides you could experience.

passes through sharp bends as it descends from the mountains down to Lake Geneva. Palm trees, vineyards, gardens and many resort spas indicate that you've arrived in the warmer climate of the "Swiss Riviera."

Another scenic journey that never gets old is along Germany's Rhine River. It's storybook Germany, a fairy-tale world of legends and robber-baron castles. After 30 years of cruising the Rhine gorge on nostalgic old riverboats, I still get a thrill. The Rhine flows about 750 miles north

from Switzerland to Holland, but the 36-mile stretch between Mainz and Koblenz hoards all the touristic charm. The whole section can be done by boat (about 5 hours downstream, 8 hours up). With limited time, focus on the most scenic hour—from St. Goar to Bacharach. Sit on the top deck and enjoy the parade of castles, towns, boats and vineyards.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.



Rick Steves

## TOP TRAVEL PICKS

## Let there be light

The shortest days and longest nights of the year are upon us. Many attractions and localities embrace the season by blanketing their best assets with stunning displays of light and beckoning visitors to embark upon an evening stroll.

Two well-regarded festivals of light take place in France through the weekend only:

- **Fete des Lumieres (Festival of Lights), Lyon:** This light display harks back to 1852, when festivities celebrating the installation of a statue of the Virgin Mary were stymied by flooding of the River Saone. The new date of Dec. 8 was threatened by a violent storm, but as the weather cleared toward nightfall, the population lit their homes with candles and gathered in the streets.

The tradition has endured, and what's regarded as one of the world's best creative light displays now features stunning projections and illuminations on a momentous scale—and crowds turn out accordingly. Forty-six projections are set to dazzle at this year's edition, running through Dec. 10. Entry is free. See [www.fetedeslumieres.lyon.fr/en](http://www.fetedeslumieres.lyon.fr/en).

- **Habits du Lumiere. Epornay, France:** The beauty of this event lies in the chance to enjoy



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: [stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler](http://stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

the illuminations with a glass of top-flight Champagne in hand. The stately avenue lined by the world's best-known Champagne makers is the setting for this atmospheric event. Video mapping, walking acts, fire installations and illuminated building facades make this an event not to miss. The light shows take place from 5 p.m. Dec. 8 and 9. On Dec. 10, a parade of 400 historical vehicles gets underway at 11 a.m.; these handsome autos can be admired up close along the Charles-de-Gaulle esplanade from 8:30 a.m. See [habitsdelumiere.epornay.fr](http://habitsdelumiere.epornay.fr).

Other light-based attractions can be visited through the Christmas holidays:

- **Christmas at Kew, Kew Royal Botanical Gardens, London:** A trail stretching more

than a mile leads visitors past twinkling lights, majestic trees, a fire garden and a village where Santa and his elves are hard at work. The route also passes through some of the buildings in the gardens. Tickets must be booked for a specific date and time slot between 5 and 7:40 p.m. through Jan. 1. Adult tickets cost 16 pounds (\$21.45) and up; [kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/christmas-at-kew](http://kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/christmas-at-kew).

- **Christmas Garden, Botanical Garden, Berlin, Germany:** A sparkling winter fairyland with more than a million points of light, vibrant illuminations and an enchanted forest awaits exploration along a mile-long path. Take a turn on the skating rink and or sit aside a cozy fire pit, warm drink or tasty snack in hand. Open 4:30-10 p.m. most days through Jan. 7; entry costs about 20 euros (\$23.70) for adults and 17.50 euros for ages 6-14 when tickets are purchased on line; [christmas-garden.de](http://christmas-garden.de).

- **Luci d'Artista, Salerno, Italy:** This city-based light show takes inspiration from the myths and sea life of the Mediterranean, the night sky, fairy tales, Christmas and other themes. Visit daily through Jan. 21; [lucidartistasalerno.com](http://lucidartistasalerno.com).

- **Luci d'Artista, Turin, Italy:** 25 illuminations grace the historical center and the city's outer



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"A Necessary Darkness" by Rona Lee is one of the light installations by international artists on display at the Amsterdam Light Festival.

reaches. Visit daily through Jan. 14; [tinyurl.com/ybeso9tk](http://tinyurl.com/ybeso9tk).

- **Amsterdam Light Festival:** The light art installations on display in the Dutch capital are created exclusively for the festival and with an eye to the specific locations in which they'll stand. These 35 works from international artists can be enjoyed by foot, cycle or boat through Jan. 21. Water Colors canal cruises passing by the displays cost about 21.50 euros for adults and 12.50 euros for kids. New this year is a light exhibition at

the Marinerterein Amsterdam, freely accessible from 5-10 p.m. each evening; [amsterdamlightfestival.com/en](http://amsterdamlightfestival.com/en).

- **Christmas at the Botanic, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland:** The mile-long trail leads visitors past a fire garden, a choir of trees, a crystal lawn and perhaps even Santa himself. Tickets start at 14 pounds for adults and 10 pounds for children. The garden is open from 4:40-8 p.m. on most days through Dec. 30; [rbge.org.uk/whats-on/home/christmas](http://rbge.org.uk/whats-on/home/christmas).



## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

## Europe



PHOTOS BY WILLIAM HOWARD/Stars and Stripes

A plate of raw seasoned rump steak offered with the all-you-can-eat menu at the Cheers Steakhouse in Bury St. Edmunds. In 2010, owners Andrea and Mario Marinho came up with the idea of offering the traditional Brazilian dish in which beef is self-cooked at your table on a very hot stone.

## After Hours: England

By WILLIAM HOWARD  
Stars and Stripes

While not everyone at the Cheers Steakhouse in Bury St. Edmunds will know your name, the staff does provide a memorable experience for beef connoisseurs with self-cooked steak on a hot stone.

For 22.50 pounds per person, diners can enjoy a continuous parade of bread, olives and chorizo sausage as an appetizer. For the main course, rump steak with rice, black beans, fries and coleslaw or salad comes with sangria, house wine or soft drinks.

Some of the restaurant's visitors fill up on the appetizers, which I think is a huge mistake. I gave them off and continue sipping from a small carafe of sangria.

I also ignore the fillers brought with the main course and focus solely on grilling thinly sliced beef seasoned with salt and olive oil. I eat it like I'm trying to set a world record.

As the meat sizzles atop the hot stone slab, tiny flecks of grease rain down on the table. The savory smell of cooking beef dominates the restaurant interior.

Yes, you can order fish, chicken and even vegetarian dishes. But why come here for that?

Owners Andrea and Mario Marinho came up with the idea of offering the traditional Brazilian beef dish in 2010. Andrea, from Brazil, and Mario, from Portugal, opened the Thetford location in 2008 and added the branch in Bury St. Edmunds this year.

howard.william@stripes.com  
Twitter @Howard\_Stripes



The bread, olive and chorizo sausage appetizer offered with the all-you-can-eat menu at the Cheers Steakhouse. For 22.50 pounds per person, diners get the appetizer along with rump steak with rice, black beans, fries and coleslaw or salad as a main course and unlimited sangria, house wine or soft drinks.

## CHEERS STEAKHOUSE

**Location:** 24 Angel Hill, Bury Saint Edmunds, IP33 1UZ. The restaurant is a 30-minute drive along the A14 from RAF Mildenhall and paid parking is available nearby in front of the abbey gardens.

**Hours:** 5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 12 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

**Dress:** Casual and business casual  
**Prices:** Appetizers from 3.50 to 7.50 pounds (\$4.69 to \$10.05); soups for 3.50 pounds;

vegetarian, fish and meat dishes from 10.50 to 17.50 pounds; and self-cooked steak on a stone from 15.50 to 17.50 pounds. The all-you-can-eat menu costs 22.50 pounds per person. Mussels and king prawns are added to the all-you-can-eat for an extra five pounds per person.

**Information:** Phone: (+44) (0) 01284 768798, website: cheersrestaurants.co.uk, email: admin@cheersrestaurants.co.uk

— William Howard

## Call them prawns or scampi, shrimp dish is a pleaser

By LINDA GASSENHEIMER  
TNS

Large shrimp smothered in garlic and wine is an Italian classic. To Italians, scampi is a small lobster called a prawn. However, in America, scampi became a term for the sauce that goes with this shrimp dish. For this quick Shrimp Scampi, I teamed red vermouth, garlic and parsley with the shrimp.

American wild shrimp are juicy and plump. Use these if they are available.

Basil and olive oil tossed with linguine makes a quick side dish.

Helpful hints:

- Dried linguine can be used instead of fresh. Boil for 8 to 9 minutes.

- The quickest way to chop parsley and basil is to snip the leaves with a scissors.

Countdown:

- Place water for linguine on to boil.

- Make shrimp.
- Cook linguine.

Shopping list:

Here are the ingredients you'll need for this dinner.

To buy: ¾ pound large-shelled shrimp, 1 small bunch parsley, 1 small bunch basil, 1 small bottle red vermouth and ¼ pound fresh linguine.

Staples: garlic, olive oil, hot pepper sauce, salt and black peppercorns.

## SHRIMP SCAMPI

**Ingredients:**

2 teaspoons olive oil  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
¼ cup red vermouth  
¼ pound large shrimp, shelled and deveined  
½ cup fresh parsley, chopped  
Several drops hot pepper sauce  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**Directions:**

Heat olive oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and add garlic and red vermouth. Cook 1 minute. Add shrimp and parsley. Cook 2 to 3 minutes until shrimp are pink. Add hot pepper sauce and salt and pepper to taste.

Yield 2 servings.

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer. Per serving: 204 calories (24 percent from fat), 5.4 g fat (0.8 g saturated), 2.4 g monounsaturated, 276 mg cholesterol, 34.9 g protein, 3.2 g carbohydrates, 0.7 g fiber, 222 mg sodium.

## BASIL LINGUINE

**Ingredients:**

¼ pound fresh linguine  
2 teaspoons olive oil  
½ cup fresh basil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**Directions:**

Bring a large saucepan with 3 to 4 quarts water to a boil. Add linguine and boil 2 to 3 minutes (8 to 9 minutes for dried). Remove 2 tablespoons

cooking water and reserve. Drain linguine and place back in saucepan with reserved water and olive oil. Toss well. Add the basil and salt and pepper to taste. Toss and serve.

Yield 2 servings.

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer. Per serving: 253 calories (19 percent from fat), 5.4 g fat (0.8 g saturated), 2.3 g monounsaturated, no cholesterol, 7.6 g protein, 42.8 g carbohydrates, 1.9 g fiber, 3 mg sodium



TNS

To Italians, scampi is a small lobster called a prawn. However, in America, scampi became a term for the garlicky sauce that goes with this shrimp dish.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe



MARY WINSTON NICKLIN/for The Washington Post

In San Vicente de sa Cala, a quiet village on the island of Ibiza, Spain, a gleaming white church is festooned with colorful ribbons flapping in the wind.

# Ibiza

## AS YOU LIKE IT

### Partiers flock to this Spanish island, but we found it a perfect family getaway

By MARY WINSTON NICKLIN  
Special to The Washington Post

**A**nchored in the Mediterranean just 93 miles from Valencia, Ibiza is the closest island in the Balearic archipelago to the Spanish mainland. Generations of travelers have heard the siren song of its sun-baked beaches and crystal-clear waters.

Of course, Ibiza also has a reputation for all-night parties, electronic music and DJ-driven clubs — including the world's largest, Privilege, which has a capacity for 10,000 revelers.

Paparazzi photos of celebrity antics are splashed across tabloids every summer, while millionaire soccer stars Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi dock their yachts side by side in the marina. Among the jet set, this is an island that's off-the-charts cool: There's a chic new Nobu hotel, billed as "the ultimate Ibiza playground"; a beach bar by the trendy Paris-based Experimental Cocktail Club; and a "live dinner experience" called Heart, a collaboration between culinary maestros Ferran and Albert Adrià and Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberte.

For an April getaway from our Paris home, we chose Ibiza for its guaranteed sunshine, beaches and the enticing low cost of the Transavia airfare.

But we're not party people. We're two parents, two daughters and one 68-year-old grandmother.

Greeting us in the airport are ads for more nightclubs, with bold, one-word monikers such as "Amnesia" and anticipated soirées with world-famous DJs. I can't help but wonder: Did we, as a family, take an unwise gamble on Ibiza?

But as we travel north in our rental car (a breezy ride from Sixt), the billboards are fewer and farther between. The landscapes unfold in a hypnotic tapestry of olive groves and pine forests. A moon is hanging over the Mediterranean by the time we arrive at our vacation house, not far from San Carlos. Perched on a rise above an olive-dotted estate, the house takes in wide vistas all the way to Tagomago island offshore. Gesturing to the island, our host, Ronald, explains that it's an exclusive spot rented out for \$20,000 per night. We are privy to the same views for \$160 per night.

Ronald shares generous tips about his home, including tales of Es Vedra, a mystical rock formation off the western coast of the island. Es Vedra is said to have special magnetic properties; some swear it's the missing piece in the puzzle of the lost city of Atlantis, while others claim it's where Odysseus succumbed to the sirens.

The map Ronald provides us — with

numbered images corresponding to 56 island beaches — becomes a tattered testament to our quest to unravel the mysteries of the "White Island."

Ages before the house music and all-night raves, the island was coveted for its strategic position on maritime trade routes. The earliest settlements were founded by the Phoenicians in the 8th century B.C., making Ibiza Town (or Eivissa in Catalan) one of the oldest settlements in the Mediterranean.

This rich history is on beautiful display on a stroll through the walled Old Town, or Dalt Vila, to the hilltop cathedral. Tranquil, cobbled alleys are lined with whitewashed houses; local guide Cheska Gimenez explains that the buildings were first painted white as a means to ward off the plague.

"The Phoenicians considered this a magic island," she says, "naming it for a Babylonian god who protects from evil spirits."

It's still got magic; Gimenez describes the island's ecosystems: salt flats, coves and marine nature reserves thick with *Posidonia oceanica*, also known as Neptune grass, which purifies the sea. Between Ibiza and the neighboring island of Formentera, this "forest" of sea grass is a UNESCO World Heritage site. At the edge of the cliff, Gimenez points out caper plants sprouting from stone walls. Below, the Mediterranean sparkles as brilliantly

blue as the Caribbean.

Hippies arrived in the 1960s as Ibiza morphed into a fabled stop on the hippie trail. They set up makeshift markets near the monumental drawbridge leading into the Old Town. It's still the fashion to wear all-white bohemian frocks on the White Island.

Today, there's a popular hippie market, Mercadillo Hippy Las Dalias, open every Saturday in San Carlos. It has a storied history, and as a tourist attraction draws busloads of visitors seeking artisanal crafts and sun fun.

"What's Ibiza?" Gimenez quotes a Latin motto: "Ad libitum." (As you like). And this is exactly what our family discovers: The island is whatever you want it to be.

Studying our map, we notice that the coastline is punctuated by seven symbols depicting ancient fortified towers. Our daughters clutch the "treasure map" as we set out for the first, closest to our house. To reach Torre de Campanitz, we follow a trail through woods and flowering meadows buzzing with bees. Reaching the thick-walled, stone tower, all of the family is giddy about the Mediterranean views.

Our "tower quest" becomes a means to explore all corners of the island and discover the myriad beaches along the way. Despite its small size (221 square

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



## FROM PAGE 30

miles). Ibiza has incredible diversity: pine-covered mountains, vineyards, quiet coves, rugged coast and sand to suit every beach personality. Some of the beaches are flanked by cliffs, or tiny camouflaged crescents, or endless swaths of sand.

We give a wide berth to the nudist beach just north of our house and continue to the Torre des Molar. This northern tower offers thrilling Mediterranean views from a precipitous perch at the top of the stairs. Is that a celebrity's villa with a shimmering pool down below? With wildflowers clinging to the stone edge, this is by far our favorite tower.

Along the way, we chance upon the most scenic beach, empty except for a few souls, inside a cove at Cala d'en Serra. It's so steep that we must park the car at the top of the road and walk down. We're rewarded with a vision out of paradise: white sand gently lapped by the turquoise sea. Nearby are the hulking remains of an abandoned hotel project by noted Catalan architect Josep Luis Sert. Work was halted in the 1970s, meaning that the area's natural state has been mostly restored. Flowers are everywhere.

To the west, we notice a shift in the vibe: A party crowd flocks for sunset cocktails and beats at Sunset Ashram, a bar above Cala Comte beach.

So we continue and find an empty trail leading to the Torre des Rovira, a path we all enjoy because of the striking, craggy coastline. The island's multihued palette shows itself at the Cala Salada beach, where orange cliffs abut the white sand. My husband leads the way to the remote corner of the beach along a path threading through pines along the cliff's edge. Our daughters thrill in the challenge.

Our quest concludes at the tower facing the rocky pinnacle of Es Vedra. The sun is beginning to sink lower in the sky when we first glimpse the rock. And it appears that Es Vedra is illuminated with strange shafts of light from the heavens above.

Perhaps the real highlight of our adventure is the discovery of countryside hamlets where Spanish traditions reign supreme. We drive through the village of Sant Vicent de sa Cala and are stopped in our tracks by the sight of a church gleaming white in the midday sun, festooned with festive ribbons in many colors. The only sounds are the garlands flapping in the wind. Inland, at Santa Gertrudis de Fruitera, we arrive to partake in a long, joyful Sunday lunch among local families crowding the terrace tables set up outside on the street. We sip glasses of Ibiza wine, soaking up the sun, while our girls run wild on the playground with the village kids.

After a week on Ibiza's rhythm, we find ourselves at La Nòria, a seafood restaurant near our house that's always packed with locals. Two kids, two parents and a grandmother linger over lunch in the sun-dappled shade beneath an arbor high on a cliff above the blue sea. The scents of jasmine and grilled fish waft on the breeze. Everyone's happy in this mellow Mediterranean moment, Ibiza style.

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# WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific

## Pleasant fairways

### Golf course at Misawa Air Base makes a forgiving space for hackers

By SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

“Wild Weasel” F-16 jet fighters screaming overhead are a pleasant distraction for hackers at Misawa Air Base’s Gosser Golf Course.

The home of the 35th Fighter Wing, in sparsely populated northeast Japan, is blessed with ample land for recreation, and those who built the base’s 18-hole golf course in 1952 made good use of it.

At more than 6,200 yards from the blue tees and 5,800 from the whites, the course, which includes five par 5s, has the sort of length that big hitters in the mold of John Daly or Rory McIlroy relish.

Misawa gets more than its share of snow, and the course serves as a cross-country ski playground during winter.

Wide fairways, reasonably short grass and shrubbery and plenty of well-spaced trees means this place is kind of forgiving if you’re not on target. Hit a massive hook or slice off the tee, and on many of the holes you might end up sitting in the middle of the next fairway, or at least have a shot at the hole from the rough.

The greens in autumn are reasonably soft but still quite fast. It can be hard to get the ball to hold chipping from an uphill lie, and it pays to carry a tool to fix your pitch marks.

There are bunkers to contend with; however, they’re not particularly deep or challenging.

There’s only one significant water hazard—a small pond with two fountains in front of the par 3 10th.

The hole was redesigned a decade ago to U.S. Golf Association standards and is supposed to provide the same sort of test as Augusta’s No. 12.

Players have a fairly large green to aim at, but it’s 186 to 192 yards away over the pond. It’s a challenge to hit it from the elevated tee that overlooks Lake Ogawara. Only a short walk from the 18th green, it’s the perfect place for a post-match dip in summer.



Photos courtesy of 35th Force Support Squadron

Above: A golfer tees off at Misawa Air Base’s Gosser Golf Course, which is situated on a hill overlooking Lake Ogawara. Below: Carts make a convenient place to relax during a tournament at the course.



If you want a workout, you’ll get a good walk here, although carts are available for those who like to conserve energy. New-looking asphalt cart paths run

part of the way along the sides of the fairways.

The course is named after Ret. Maj. Delbert Gosser, a former member of the 531st Tactical

Fighter Squadron who died from injuries after ejecting from his F-100 Super Sabre into the Pacific Ocean near Misawa on Jan. 5, 1962.

## ON THE QT

### DIRECTIONS

Gosser Golf Course is a 5-minute drive west of the Misawa Air Base flight line, next to Lake Ogawara.

### TIMES

November to March: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; October: 7:15 a.m. to dusk (weekdays), 6:15 a.m. to dusk (weekends); May to September: 6:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. (weekdays), 5:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. (weekends); April: 7:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. (weekdays), 6:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. (weekends)

### COSTS

An 18-hole green fee ranges from \$9 for lower enlisted to \$13.25 for civilians and \$36.75 for local national guests. Juniors can play for \$4.50. Golf cart rental is \$9.

### FOOD

Lakeview Grill, a restaurant in the same building as the course’s pro shop, serves burgers, sandwiches, salads, pizzas and a variety of side dishes. Most items cost less than \$10.

### INFORMATION

Website: 35fss.com/golf\_course.php

— Seth Robson

His memory lives on in the course and the Air Force fighters that still train in the sky above. The course is only about a 5-minute drive from Misawa’s flight line, which the Air Force shares with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and commercial aircraft.

There’s also a spacious driving range to work on your shots, a pro shop and a restaurant where you can refuel and enjoy a cold one after mastering or surrendering to the course.

robson.seth@stripes.com

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## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

## Pacific



PHOTOS BY MATT BURKE/Stars and Stripes

Above: Smoke Camp's tomato and avocado ajillo is meant to top thinly sliced Italian bread. The olive oil came hot, infused with garlic, rosemary and lemon to accompany the heaping pile of avocado slices and tomatoes. Right: The eatery's charcoal-grilled shrimp will seem to melt in your mouth.



## This lo mein cooks quicker than ordering

BY JILL WENDHOLT SILVA  
The Kansas City Star

**H**ow fast can you make lo mein? Some recipes say 15 minutes. Others say 20. But this Speedy Chicken Lo Mein is faster than it would take you to order it at a Chinese restaurant.

Speed things up by using a frozen stir-fry blend and broccoli slaw available in the produce aisle.

The recipe is also healthier than most fast-food versions because we opt for low-sodium products. The average 1 cup serving of lo mein has about 500 milligrams of sodium, according to fatsecret.com, a calorie counter app. Our version: 2 cups with 321 milligrams of sodium.

## SPEEDY CHICKEN LO MEIN

## Ingredients:

8 ounces whole-grain linguine or linguine  
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon honey  
1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil  
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
1 cup sliced button mushrooms  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger  
Pinch crushed red pepper flakes  
2 cups frozen pepper stir-fry blend  
2 cups broccoli slaw  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup reduced-sodium chicken broth

Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and set aside.

In a small bowl, stir together balsamic vinegar, soy sauce and honey; set aside.

Heat oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add chicken. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until chicken is lightly browned and fully cooked. Remove chicken to a plate and set aside.

Add mushrooms to heat. Add mushrooms. Cook, stirring 4 minutes. Add garlic, ginger and hot pepper flakes and cook, stirring until any moisture the mushrooms released has evaporated.

Add pepper blend and broccoli slaw. Cook, stirring frequently, 3 to 4 minutes. Return chicken to skillet. Pour broth and vinegar mixture over all and stir to blend well. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until liquids boil. Cook 2 to 3 minutes or until liquids are reduced by about half and chicken is hot.

Stir in linguine and toss to combine.

Makes 4 servings, 432 calories each

## After Hours: Japan

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
Stars and Stripes

**F**ew things are more Japanese than a restaurant with a gimmick, however, those become increasingly rare the farther you venture from the cultural glitter cannons of Tokyo and Osaka.

For that reason, I was a bit leery when I heard about a new restaurant on the sleepy Awase bay street of Okinawa City that offers more than 50 homemade smoked dishes. Even the nuts are smoked.

Half-expecting to see Cheech and Chong grinning at me from behind the counter, I decided to give Smoke Camp Dining a go on a recent rainy evening. I was pleasantly surprised by what I found.

Smoke Camp was one of the best dining experiences I have had on the island. Everything about it was enjoyable. Prices were cheap; the wood decor was warm and inviting; the booth-like seating areas were private and comfortable; the cocktails were strong but delicious; and the food was vibrant, light and healthy.

It was everything I look for in a restaurant or a quiet place to enjoy cocktails with friends after a long week of work.

For those with a big appetite, Smoke Camp offers a course menu, five dishes and two hours with unlimited drinks for 3,000 yen (or about \$27). Choices include a meat assortment of African-grilled chicken, spare ribs, bacon, sausage and risotto or baked onigiri (rice ball), or a smoked platter of homemade sausage with a bechamel (white) sauce, shishamo (fish), tako (octopus), mentaiko (pollock roe), iburigakko (pickled daikon



Smoke Camp's smoked duck salad with green onions is affordable, delicious and enough for two.

## SMOKE CAMP DINING

**Location:** 4 Chome-31-3 Awase, Okinawa-shi, Okinawa-ken, Japan, 904-2172  
**Hours:** Open 6 p.m. until 2 a.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays, Sundays and Japanese holidays; 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. Fridays, Saturdays and the day before a Japanese

holiday. Closed Mondays.

**Prices:** Small plates of food start at only a couple of dollars. Check the website for coupons.

**Dress:** Casual  
**Information:** 098-937-3993; <https://smokecamp.oawt.jp/en>  
— Matthew M. Burke

radish), chicken, nuts and their pasta of the day. The courses also come with a carpaccio starter and a French toast, ice cream crepe (vanilla or gelato) for dessert.

For those who merely like to munch while they drink, they also offer an a la carte menu, complete with light, small-plate, tapas-style fare.

Our party started off with a smoked duck salad with green onions for 600 yen. It was the perfect size for two at an outstanding price. Lightly dressed

with oil and vinegar, the colors of the lettuce, red cabbage and carrots were like a painting, arriving on a stone slab.

I'm no expert on how smoked duck should taste, but it was moist and had good flavor.

We ordered the tomato and avocado ajillo with bread for the table for 500 yen. The olive oil came hot, infused with garlic, rosemary and lemon to accompany the heaping pile of avocado slices and tomatoes. It sang from atop the thinly sliced Italian bread.

We tried the whole charcoal-grilled shrimp for 580 yen. The five shrimp arrived on a bed of greens. They were succulent and seemed to melt in my mouth. The smoked octopus for 500 yen was chewy and tasted sublime when sprinkled with a little ajillo oil.

Other highlights from Smoke Camp's menu include thinly sliced raw tuna for 1,000 yen, smoked scallops for 500 yen, soft charcoal-grilled spareribs for 580 yen, lamb on the bone smoked with apple chips for 880 yen and smoked tandoori chicken for 650 yen.

Drinks start at 300 yen for non-alcoholic choices like coffee and juice. Alcoholic beverages start at 350 yen for certain beers and 380 yen for a glass of sangria and go as high as 1,400 yen for a double of Yamazaki whiskey, considered one of the best in the world.

I tried the ginger ale high ball (400 yen), a delicate tight-rope walk of a drink. Add too much ginger ale and it is too sweet and unappealing; too much generic whiskey and it becomes a glass of rusty nails. Again, Smoke Camp was right on the money. The drink was perfection.

The restaurant also has a comprehensive wine list.

For dessert, Smoke Camp has something to satisfy that sweet tooth as well. Choices include gelato; mango and berry French toast with ice cream; affogato; and a double chocolate brownie. You can also try toasted marshmallow with ice cream, in keeping with the smoked, wood, camping motif.

I'll definitely be back to Smoke Camp. It seemed like a strange fetish at first, but ended up being a lot more than smoke and mirrors.

[burke.matt@stripes.com](mailto:burke.matt@stripes.com)

## WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

## Pillow talk

## Love 'em or hate 'em

Bill Herren designs pillows as part of his job as creative director for Woodard, an outdoor furniture manufacturer in Coppell, Texas.

"I get such grief from everybody about my throw pillows because I love my throw pillows," he says. "I know why men hate them: They don't want to put them back."

The anti-throw-pillow crowd also might not know what to do with the pillows once they remove them from a piece of furniture, says Herren, who introduces a new pillow shape each year for the company's collection. His solution: "Just throw them on the floor — especially those made with outdoor fabrics. They're so easy to clean."

## Drop zone

If you don't want throw pillows to end up on the floor, provide a drop space for them, says Suzanne Lasky, an interior designer and owner of S Interior Design in Scottsdale, Ariz. A bench at the foot of the bed, a basket near the couch or a side chair would all do, she said.

"You need that so you don't get annoyed that your \$100 silk pillow is on the floor," she says.

And if you're going to indulge in different looks for summer and winter, or holiday-inspired pillows embellished with reindeer or flags, Lasky suggests investing in space saver bags — storage bags that let you compress items by vacuuming out excess air. She also recommends that "active households" (those with pets, children or messy husbands) consider using pillows made with durable, outdoor fabrics.

## Trying out trends

Smith, who designs luxury outdoor pillows in weatherproof fabrics, estimates that about a third of them end up indoors. For some people, pillows are a way to indulge in trends without really making over a room, she said. She often incorporates the latest colors, fabrics and other inspirations from the fashion runway in her work. Past collections have included a gladiator pillow and a hula pillow based on clothing Smith spotted on the catwalk.

## Pillow talk

Also popular are pillows that say something, says Susan Hardin, owner of The Little Birdie pillow company in Calhoun City, Miss. Building on the popularity of small signs and plaques featuring inspirational sayings, she began adding words to her designs. Pillows emblazoned with the words Be Still and Live Simply are among her top-selling designs.

## Comfort counts

Color, shape and size all matter when you're selecting a throw pillow, but nothing is more important than comfort, said Asad Syrkett, a senior editor at the architectural design website Curbet.com. He regularly leans on his favorite accent pillow and uses it to prop up his laptop. "You want it to look great and be comfortable," said Syrkett, who once penned a blog post entitled, "Throw Pillows: In Defense of a Divisive Home Accessory."

## Not everyone loves this (easy and inexpensive) way to refresh a room

It's a well-known decorating fact that throw pillows are an easy and inexpensive way to change the look of a room. They can add color, texture, interest or a dash of holiday cheer. But that doesn't mean everybody appreciates them.

The internet is full of women (and their interior designers) complaining that husbands don't understand the decorative aspects of throw pillows. Pillow aversion among men is a real thing, says pillow designer Elaine Smith.

"It's become a joke, but it's only a joke because it's true. They don't understand why we need to have eight pillows on the bed," she says.

By MELISSA KOSSLER DUTTON/Associated Press



Throw pillows everywhere: In a living room, above; in a master bedroom, left; and outside on a lounge.

AP photos





## WEEKEND: MOVIES



**"The Disaster Artist" tells the story of the making of Tommy Wiseau's (James Franco, far left in photo at left) cult-classic film "The Room." It's based on Wiseau's "The Room" co-star Greg Sestero's (Dave Franco, far right) novel "My Life Inside The Room, the Greatest Bad Movie Ever Made."**

A24/AP

## ROOM FOR INTERPRETATION

## How James Franco made a good movie about the worst film ever

BY LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

There are bad movies, and then there is "The Room," a spectacularly bizarre independent drama from 2003 starring, written, financed and directed by Tommy Wiseau, a unique-looking and accented man of ambiguous age and origin. "The Room" tells the story of a San Francisco banker, Johnny (Wiseau), whose fiancée, Lisa, and best friend, Mark, have an affair. And it is bafflingly awful — scenes are out of focus, plotlines are left dangling, soft-core sex scenes leave you cringing, and the dialogue sounds downright alien.

Film critic Scott Foundas wrote at the time that the "Pic may be something of a first: A movie that prompts most of its viewers to ask for their money back — before even 30 minutes have passed."

And yet, "The Room," which a film professor called "the 'Citizen Kane' of bad movies," took on a life of its own. It became a cult favorite of the midnight movie set, who treat it as a "Rocky Horror Picture Show"-like event (there is shouting, spoon-throwing and walk-outs), a popular book about the making of the film co-written by Greg Sestero, who played Mark, and now a feature

film about the whole ordeal, "The Disaster Artist," directed by and starring James Franco as Wiseau.

"The Disaster Artist" is not a spoof or a parody. It is a sincerely told (and incidentally very fun and funny) story about two outsiders, Sestero and Wiseau, who move to Los Angeles with dreams of stardom and no idea how to realize them.

"For us, it was a relationship story," said Michael H. Weber, who co-wrote the script with Scott Neustadter ("500) Days of Summer"). "This one is a little different but it's no less real and no less complicated than the others we've written."

Franco also wanted to make it a classic L.A. film with all the trimmings — the bad diners in the Valley, the creepy agents, the naive, the auditions that go nowhere — the things he remembers from being a struggling actor in L.A. around the same time Sestero moved here with Wiseau in 1998.

He cast his younger brother, actor Dave Franco, as Sestero. It's the first time they've acted together in a significant way.

"I've tried to get him into a lot of movies. Some of them he just didn't vibe with. And there was a point in his career where he wanted to get out from, I guess, my shadow, or just create his own identity apart from me," said



TAYLOR JEWELL, INVISION/AP

James Franco. "I just thought: This is the one. This is the one we should do together... we have the perfect dynamic for this."

James Franco is unrecognizable, behind the prosthetics (which took 2½ hours to apply), eccentric costumes and vaguely Eastern European-sounding accent required to play the enigmatic Wiseau.

While Sestero is less of a "character" than Wiseau, Dave Franco has his own hurdles.

"He's making a lot of bad decisions throughout the film and I had to try to justify each of those so the audience would understand why this guy continued on this journey with this madman," Dave Franco said. "But he was a young actor who was not getting support from anyone else in his life and then he met this guy who encouraged him and told him he could make it."

Sestero, who was only 19 when he met Wiseau in a San Francisco acting class, said he feels like he has been talking about "The Room" nonstop for almost

eight years. The phenomenon, he said, "just continues to amaze and defy logic."

"My whole goal was to make something great out of something that was considered terrible," Sestero said.

And so far, it's working. "The Disaster Artist" has been getting positive reviews and awards buzz. "I felt like the subject matter had the potential to be bigger than this indie, art house thing," Franco said.

The full-force marketing campaign, led by hip indie distributor A24 (the shop behind last year's best picture winner "Moonlight"), has leaned in to the peculiarities of Wiseau's guerrilla marketing campaign, creating a billboard in the heart of Hollywood almost exactly like the one Wiseau commissioned in 2003, right down to the RSVP phone number.

As for whether or not one needs to see "The Room" first, Weber likes to quote Paul Scheer, the comedian behind the "How Did This Get Made" podcast who

also plays the cinematographer in the film.

"He says, 'If you've seen "The Room," "The Disaster Artist" is a sequel. If you haven't seen "The Room," "The Disaster Artist" is a prequel,"' said Weber.

While the cult of "The Room" is in some ways inexplicable, its enduring appeal is undeniable.

"In the history of Hollywood, there are thousands upon thousands of bad movies that we will never watch again. 'The Room' is something that people have been watching religiously for 14 years. I don't think that's because Tommy made bizarre decisions at every turn. I really believe it's because when Tommy made it, he put his heart and soul into it. He was trying to make a great movie," Franco said. "Maybe there's something to the idea that we're all a little afraid of failure, of public embarrassment. Maybe it makes us feel a little better about ourselves. But also there must be something that makes us feel for Tommy. People are drawn to that vulnerability."

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

## Sia, Smokey and Stefani

The Associated Press reviews a diverse slate of new releases that can get you in the holiday mood



**Sia, 'Everyday Is Christmas' (Monkey Puzzle/Atlantic Records)**

Sia has proven she's a powerhouse in pop music, so it's no surprise that her holiday album of original songs sounds as good as any contemporary pop project.

"Everyday Is Christmas" features Sia's strong songwriting skills, with tracks ranging from cute to touching.

"Let's go below zero and hide from the sun, I'll love you forever, Oh we'll have some fun," she sings on the ballad "Snowman."

Using the holidays and things around it as metaphors is one of the album's themes. On another soft gem, "Snowflake," Sia sings sweetly, sounding like a mother who is sending her child off to college or elsewhere.

Sia worked on the songs with longtime collaborator Greg Kurstin, who has also lent his magical touch to Adele, Kelly Clarkson, Pink and other superstars. They put together a 10-track set that will put you in a happy mood.

The lead single and opening track, "Santa's Coming for Us," is a festive adventure; "Ho Ho Ho" is the perfect, whiskey-flavored party song; and "Underneath the Mistletoe" is an R&B gem.

The most adorable song on the album? "Puppies Are Forever."

It features dogs barking cutely near the end of the song and includes the lyrics, "Puppies are forever, not just for Christmas."

Fact.  
— Mesfin Fekadu



**Smokey Robinson, 'Christmas Everyday' (Amazon)**

Smokey Robinson is a Christmas album veteran, even if those he recorded with The Miracles are from decades ago. "Christmas Everyday" is his first solo album in the category and it's a fine addition to the canon.

The Robinson-penned title track dates back to 1963, its Motown roots ringing out clearly with help from husband-and-wife team Us The Duo, while New York soul traditionalists the Dap-Kings spice up "You're My Present," another Robinson composition.

There are a few songs you'll find on nearly all Christmas albums, some given not-so-usual arrangements.

"White Christmas" undergoes a very danceable Brazilian makeover, which makes one wonder if it ever snows in Rio de Janeiro, and "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" includes its seldom-sung jazzy introduction and a fun solo by Trombone Shorty.

Versions of Donny Hathaway's "This Christmas" and Charles Brown's "Please Come Home for Christmas" further amplify the soul quotient, and throughout the album Robinson's rhythms will help you forget your blues.

— Pablo Gorondy



**Gwen Stefani, 'You Make It Feel Like Christmas' (Interscope Records)**

Gwen Stefani's Christmas album could have been delivered with a little more of her signature sass, but it's a solid release nonetheless.

Stefani is clearly comfortable with standard renditions of Christmas classics, as there is no real effort to depart from the traditional delivery on songs like "Jingle Bells" and "Let It Snow." Aside from a few lighthearted yelps here and there, the tracks are routinely rendered and somewhat punchless.

The only song that reveals the hollaback girl's heart is "When I Was A Little Girl," which she co-wrote. More tender, personal tracks like this would have been a present indeed.

— Ron Harris



**Leslie Odom Jr., 'Simply Christmas' (Deluxe Edition) (S-Curve Records)**

The smooth and silky voice of Leslie Odom Jr. is back with the deluxe version of his 2016 holiday album, "Simply Christmas." The Tony-winning actor adds to his traditional holiday collection with four more tracks, including "Edelweiss" and "The Christmas Waltz."

Odom's delivery on standards like "Please Come Home for Christmas" and "The Christmas Song" is timeless, as he honors those classic melodies with his pitch-perfect precision. But don't expect the "Hamilton" star to duplicate the delivery from his award-winning turn as Aaron Burr. That's fine, because what you get is a dozen timeless holiday tunes by a young guy with an old soul.

— John Carucci



**Fantasia, 'Christmas After Midnight' (Concord Records)**

With the barely-there red dress she's wearing on the cover, the come-hither pose on the back and the suggestive title, one might think Fantasia's first Christmas album is something to be played after the kids and grandparents have gone to bed.

But "Christmas After Midnight" is your typical, family-friendly holiday fare, filled with the traditional songs about the time of year that we've come to expect, along with Fantasia's signature soulful, gritty bent.

She gets particularly and appropriately funky on James Brown's "Santa Claus Go Straight to the Ghetto"; she soars like a gospel star on "Give Love on Christmas Day"; and "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve" is given tender, reserved treatment by Fantasia here.

The album ends with an untraditional song, Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" — it certainly wasn't written for the holidays — but it still works here, thanks to Fantasia's powerful voice.

What doesn't work as well is "Baby, It's Cold Outside." The duet is already a bit politically incorrect given its leering tone, but getting CeLo Green — who pleaded no contest to giving a woman ecstasy — to sing on a song that includes the line "what's in this drink" certainly makes you feel less than warm this holiday season.

— Nekesa Mumbai Moody

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37



## WEEKEND: MUSIC

## ELEVATION

## U2

Songs of Experience  
(Interscope)

## After long delay, New U2 album is a thrilling listen

Like its 2014 predecessor, U2's "Songs of Experience" is the product of a difficult and drawn-out recording process.

Much more so than "Songs of Innocence," however, U2 has made an exciting, stage-ready album that doesn't blush or blink in its use of the band's signature sounds — The Edge's chiming guitar, Adam Clayton's trebly, adhesive bass, Larry Mullen Jr.'s sharp and responsive drums and Bono's heart-on-his-vocal-cords singing.

"Songs of Experience" was supposed to be completed soon after "Songs of Innocence," but things kept getting in its way.

From the automatic iTunes download fiasco of "Innocence," Bono's debilitating bicycle accident in New York three years ago and another, more recent, yet-to-be-described health scare, plus the changing political landscape and the wildly successful 30th anniversary tour of "The Joshua Tree," which is barely over, sometimes the pause button was getting pressed and sometimes it was rewind or rip it up and start again.

While the last two albums — the other was 2009's "No Line on the Horizon" — had some strong songs and sounds, there was a sense of erratic dispersion, of the whole being less than its components.

The new record is a thrilling listen because U2 sounds fully integrated again, a band with everyone on the same page and, as importantly, in the same groove.

"Swan Lake"-like strings launch opener "Love Is All We Have Left," as Bono duets with his own electronically modified voice on another of his typically zeitgeisty ballads.

Breaking the musical mood if not the lyrical one, Bono seems to relive his bike crash on "Lights of Home" as distorted acoustic guitar and cymbal splashes give way to an emotional solo from The Edge and a gospel-like, gap-in-the-clouds ending with assistance from Haim, who also get co-credit for the music.

"You're the Best Thing About Me" has more of U2's DNA of thumping drums and ringing guitars, but the message is ambivalent — you're magnificent, but I'm leaving anyway.

Kendrick Lamar raps on the transition between "Get Out of Your Own Way" and "American Soul," not really integrated in either, and Lady Gaga sings backing on "Summer of Love."

"Red Flag Day," a counterpart of the anthemic songs on 1983's "War," references the scores of migrants drowning in the Mediterranean Sea, and "The Showman" could be a Bono mini-biopic.

Nearly every song has a different producer or combination thereof, but they all seem to have been peeking at each other's notes. The result is the best U2 album since "All That You Can't Leave Behind."

— Pablo Gorondi/Associated Press



ANTON CORBIN/Courtesy of Nasty Little Man



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

Various artists, "Holidays Rule Vol. 2" (Capitol Records)

Early into "Holidays Rule Vol. 2," you start to wonder if the album's theme was annoying songs by really talented people.

It begins with a remake of Paul McCartney's "Wonderful Christmas-time," with Sir Paul, Jimmy Fallon and The Roots. It's a recorded version of a mix first performed on Fallon's show that demonstrates the band's talent but can't save an annoying song that earns McCartney royalties — and damages his reputation — every time it's played in a grocery store.

There's a gimmick calypso number by the supremely talented Lady Street Dive called "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas" that we can only hope won't alter the permanent holiday canon.

But there are gems here, too. "A Winter Romance" by Vera Blue, and Muma's version of a better McCartney composition, "Pipes of Peace," stand out on a collection that mixes hits, misses and oh-my-gosh-I-can't-un-hear-that blunders.

— Scott Strand



Patti LaBelle and Friends, "Home for the Holidays" (GPE Records)

Patti LaBelle has recruited a talented roster for "Home for the Holidays" and, in the spirit of Christmas generosity, she gives them ample room in the limelight.

The repertoire is varied, including vocal interpretations of classical works like Schubert's "Ave Maria" (by Ruben Studdard) and "Brahms Lullaby," as well as versions of more recent Christmas favorites with secular themes like "Don't Save It All for Christmas Day" and "Grown up Christmas List," both LaBelle solo spots.

Also featured are Modern Christian hits like "Mary, Did You Know?" while pianist Jamar Jones, who co-produced the set, leads the band on the relaxed "O What a Night" and the carnivalesque "Brazilian Sleigh Bells."

Other performers are vocalist Vivian Green on the "The Christmas Song" and "Maybe Next Year" and gospel great Tameka Mann — who duets with LaBelle on "Jesus King!" — which will surely get you in the spirit. If you're yearning for a diverse set for the holidays, LaBelle has cooked up a feast.

— Pablo Gorondi



Elvis Presley, "Christmas with Elvis and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra" (Sony Legacy)

It isn't really Christmas without the King crooning "Blue Christmas," so we welcome a clutch of classic holiday songs by Elvis Presley nicely augmented by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The 13 songs are pulled from "Elvis' Christmas Album" (1957) and "Elvis Sings the Wonderful World of Christmas" (1971), and they haven't been messed with except for the addition of strings and horns, often employing admirable restraint.

There's danger in altering these gems, but the new orchestral parts blend tastefully. If the originals were a little spare with a honkytonk feel, they're now lush and virtually cinematic. Most emerge better, including such fragile beauties as "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silver Bells."

The orchestra approach has been done before with some of Presley's non-holiday songs, but it often overpowered the tunes while sounding forced and excessive. This time it's different. Maybe Presley's Christmas songs are hearty enough to support more sweeping arrangements. Whatever it is, giving the King the royal treatment works beautifully.

— Mark Kennedy



Various artists, "13 Days of Xmas" (Bloodshot Records)

If Santa sales and reindeer displays before Halloween have zapped your mirth by December, then quickly give "13 Days of Xmas" a listen. This alt-holiday collection is a perfect antidote for commercial Christmas overdose.

The deliciously subversive "The Pagans Had It Right" is a highlight, from Chicago's bluesy jug band Devil in a Woodpile. Featuring stellar picker Joel Patterson on banjo, Beau Sample's jaunty bass and Rick Sherry's exuberant kazoo, this is definitely not "Silent Night."

Ruby Boots' "I Slept Through Christmas" is for grinchers, the lovelorn and anyone else drawn to her rootsy retro voice with a bit of Nashtrian twang. The Perth native laments, "The faster the better it passes me by, can't help it I just want to cry."

Zach Schmidt makes "I'm Drunk Again This Christmas" a perfect redneck card, shooting whiskey to make the relatives more bearable, with a moaning pedal steel to top it off.

— Lindsey Tanner



Tom Chaplin, "Twelve Tales of Christmas" (Interscope Records)

Tom Chaplin takes the road less traveled on "Twelve Tales of Christmas," recording mostly songs he helped write instead of the well-trodden Christmas chestnuts. He makes it a glorious journey.

After long deferring to bandmate Tim Rice-Oxley on Keane's albums, Chaplin rediscovered his songwriting chops on his first solo album, "The Wave," from 2016.

Like the "loving hearts and homes" on "Midnight Mass" or "love as our gravity" on "Under A Million Lights," the lyrics here center on family, loss, redemption and real values, inspired by what Chaplin says are the "bittersweet qualities" of the holiday season.

The best of the four covers is opener "Walking in the Air," a British favorite which has dozens of versions but benefits here from the purest qualities of Chaplin's voice.

Other songs, like the urban romanticism of "London Lights," or the soaring, Keane-like "Follow My Heart," make "Twelve Tales of Christmas" a great listen in any season.

— Pablo Gorondi



## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

## MARIO

## Examining what made 'Odyssey' a super success

BY MICHAEL S. DARNELL  
Stars and Stripes

**B**y now, the success of "Super Mario Odyssey" is well-known among the gaming community.

Chances are, if you're reading this, you're well aware of the game's stellar critical reception. Game reviewers far and wide have proclaimed "Odyssey" to be one of the best games of the year, with some even going so far as to call it one of the best Mario titles ever made.

What you may or may not be aware of is that "Odyssey" also is a grand financial success for Nintendo, moving millions of copies in a

matter of days, according to a statement released by the company.

So, instead of a general review of a title that most gamers are either going to get or have already beaten, I'm going to examine some of the elements that I believe made "Odyssey" a hit.

The first and major element behind its success is the Nintendo Switch itself. This charming piece of hardware has been the pleasant surprise of the year, with a library of fantastic titles trickling out in 2017 to keep the system fresh in gamers' minds. Games like "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild," "Splatoon 2" and even "Arms"

have provided ample reasons to keep the system from collecting dust.

This has made the Switch a very popular device to have—even among gamers who skipped over the Wii U. According to Business Insider, the Switch is expected to sell 14 million units by March 2018. The Wii U, by comparison, sold fewer than that across its entire lifespan.

This obviously influenced the high sales marks for "Odyssey." A more entrenched player base means more potential sales.

That doesn't guarantee more actual sales. "Snip-clipclips," another Switch exclusive, certainly didn't sell 2 million copies in less than a week.

That leads to the second major element behind "Odyssey's" success, which is brand recognition. No matter your background, if you've played a console game in the past 30 years, you've at least heard of Mario.

"Super Mario Run" expanded the brand even further, reaching to mobile gamers who may not have ever had a Nintendo console.

However, name recognition and nostalgia—while a powerful one-two punch—don't explain the critical success of "Odyssey." While a constant fixture in the gaming world, the Mario

games—even among the mainline entries—have ranged from classic to forgettable.

While I think it a bridge too far to call any of the recent Mario games bad, there have been some supremely vanilla entries in the long-running series.

There was nothing wrong with "New Super Mario Bros. 2" or "Super Mario 3D World," but there was nothing great about them, either. Same could be said for any number of the side Mario projects. The Mario name might generate some blind sales, but critics as a whole are not so easily swayed.

So what made "Odyssey" different than those titles? To me, the key to understanding the game's critical success is the way it feels entirely original, without losing that classic Mario feel or relying on gimmicks. "Odyssey" brings Mario back into a familiar 3-D, open-world space reminiscent of "Super Mario 64." It even relies on the same basic premise, with progression being tied to collecting doo-dads (this time around they're Power Moons) scattered across the levels.

"Mario 64" had seven stars scattered across each of the levels, and generally they weren't complicated to find or collect. The Power Moons are handled quite a bit differently, as there are sometimes dozens of them in a level to find. Some of them are easily found, but a number of them are hidden away or locked behind some brain teaser or precision platforming bit.

To clear a level and continue to the next, Mario will have to collect a set number of moons. Never once did I have to spend more time on a level than I wanted to, though. There were ample moons found just by simply playing through the level.

Conversely, when I wanted to spend more time on a level—I like the wildly imaginative, food-based Luncheon Kingdom—I had plenty of moons to collect while exploring. "Mario 64" allowed players the opportunity to tackle levels at their own pace, but here, that feeling is amplified.

The other major gameplay element affecting "Odyssey's" success is tied to the game's central gimmick. As the game opens, Bowser once again kidnaps Princess Peach and Mario naturally rides to the rescue. In the ensuing

fight, our beloved plumber's trademark hat is torn to shreds and he's unceremoniously blasted into the conveniently named Cap Kingdom. There he teams up with a sentient hat by the name of Cappy.

From there on, Mario is given the ability to fling Cappy at enemies with the press of a button. Depending on what Mario throws his new hat at, Cappy can either destroy it or possess it. By possessing enemies, Mario can use their abilities to solve puzzles and overcome obstacles. Taking over a Goomba, for instance, allows him to stack atop other Goombas to reach otherwise inaccessible areas.

By flinging his hat, he also can reach new areas by using it as a temporary platform, which opens up areas across all levels that you'd never see otherwise.

The best part of the hat-throwing mechanic is how natural it feels. Within seconds, flinging Cappy around will feel as natural to most players as jumping or butt-stomping enemies. With a little practice, players will be able to pull off extensive jumping combos that feel amazing. There are some optional Joy-Con motion controls, but I never found them necessary to finish the game.

While playing through "Odyssey," I couldn't help but compare it to "Super Mario Sunshine." In that GameCube exclusive, Mario also had a new mechanic that allowed him to reach new areas and defeat bosses. But I never really felt comfortable with the water pack in "Sunshine."

When I finished that game, I thought how much better it would've been without its reliance on that specific gimmick. When I finished "Odyssey," I wondered how it took so long for Nintendo to implement such a fantastically fun feature. If it doesn't return in some fashion in subsequent Mario games, I'll feel like a loss of something special.

In fact, that's how I felt when I finished "Odyssey" altogether. Though I spent some time collecting unneeded moons, I progressed through the game fairly quickly. I know I missed out on a lot of content,

which is great, because when I defeated Bowser for the final time in "Odyssey" I couldn't wait to go back and play it again.

That, too, is part of the game's success. It's short enough that a dedicated player could probably finish all the levels in a long weekend, but there is enough content to keep players happy for much, much longer.

Not just gameplay, either. There are some fun extras to be found both in the main game and in the extra content after the story is complete. In addition to the Power Moons, purple, level-specific coins are scattered across the worlds.

By exchanging those at stores, Mario can change his costume. Everything from a pirate captain to chef is on the table here. I'm only a little embarrassed to admit that I got a fair amount of enjoyment out of customizing Mario to fit each level. But the purple coins are generally well-hidden, so I know I missed out on a few fun costume pieces.

If for some reason you own a Switch and haven't picked up "Odyssey," I urge you to buy it as soon as possible. Mario has long been the unifying ground for gamers both casual and hardcore, but "Odyssey" is really something special. I'd easily put it in the top tier of what the series has had to offer.

Time will tell if it'll eclipse some of the series' classic entries, but one thing is for sure—"Odyssey" is one of the true must-buy games of 2017.

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"Super Mario Odyssey" was one of Game Informer's Top 10 Switch games for November. The game's success is multifold and can be attributed to the Switch, Nintendo's top-selling device, brand recognition and addictive quality.

Photos courtesy of Nintendo

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION &amp; DVD



LIONSGATE/AP

Dylan O'Brien, left, and Shiva Negar star in "American Assassin," now out on DVD.

## NEW ON DVD

**"Conor McGregor: Notorious":** The explosive rise to prominence of the mixed martial arts superstar is documented through director Gavin Fitzgerald's 90-minute documentary. While the film offers some rare looks at the life for McGregor outside the octagon ring to show where McGregor is today, the director hesitates in putting into perspective what it was in McGregor's past that made him into the man and fighter he's become. The strength of the film is McGregor, who loves and lives the bigger-than-life persona of an icon. Whether it be during training sessions, dealing with fans or stressing out about the damage that's being done to his body, McGregor tackles every moment like a man standing at the edge of an abyss. He's going to fight with a relentless passion to hold on to each success he captures while living in a place where the end could come with one well-placed punch.

**"American Assassin":** The film, based on the works of spy novel writer Vince Flynn, takes a very different and refining approach to the genre. Flynn's 13 spy novels, which started in 1999 with "Transfer of Power," rejected the traditional world of spies, moving the focus to a world that was no longer a tug-of-war between two superpowers but often held hostage by a bevy of terror groups around the globe. The approach of the spies playing a chess-like game gave way to more straight-on conflicts. The final big element that separates "American Assassin" from the spy pack is the screenplay by Stephen Schiff, Michael Finch, Edward Zwick and Marshall Herskovitz based on Flynn's book never forgets the action is unfolding in a real world. The chase scenes have to deal with traffic issues, and after a big fight, there are cuts and bruises.

**"Despicable Me 3":** It comes across less like the latest animated tale in the popular franchise about the once-evil Gru (Steve Carell) and more like a made-for-television movie rushed into production to introduce a new TV series. The third production in the series lacks the warmth and fun of the original 2010 film and comes nowhere close to having the offbeat antics of the second film that hit theaters in 2013. As a bonus, the sequel solidified the fame of the most entertaining group of yellow-skinned characters this side of "The Simpsons" in the Minions.

Also available on DVD:

**"Better Watch Out":** Babysitter must protect those in the house from a home invasion. Olivia DeJonge stars.

**"Crash Pad":** A woman's husband and lover move in together and start living a bachelor's life. Christina Applegate stars.

**"Fargo Year Three":** Chapter three focuses on Emmitt Stussy, the Parking Lot King of Minnesota, and his younger brother, Ray (both played by Ewan McGregor).

**"The Simpsons — Season 18"**

**"Howard Lovecraft and the Unlucky King-don":** Animated feature that follows a young boy and his dog on an adventure that takes them to the depths of the ocean.

**"Singularity":** Group of teens must stop a computer before it wipes out all humanity.

**"Dementia 13":** Strange figure forces family members to reveal their dark secrets.

**"Crucifixion":** Five monks and a priest help a young woman possessed by a demon.

— Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service

## CLASS ACT

Tamlyn Tomita had family support  
— as a kid, and as an actress

BY LUANEE LEE

Tribune News Service

When actress Tamlyn Tomita was in elementary school, she clashed in lots of playground scuffles. It wasn't that the petite brunette was particularly aggressive. But when the kids would taunt her about her ethnicity, she would come out swinging. "It happens to a lot of people who aren't American-born," she says. "When they ask what are you? Where do you come from? I'm from here. I was probably 8 when we moved to Northridge (Calif.). They said, 'What are you? Where are you from?'"

"I didn't understand the question till I went home and my father and mother had to explain it to me. 'Your father's from here, but grandfather and grandmother are from Japan and your mother is from Okinawa and the Philippines.' In elementary school you hear those playground taunts and you start to stand up for yourself," she says, seated at a glass-topped table in the sunny hotel patio.

"Since I was the eldest, I got into a lot of street fights. It wasn't just blabbing off. It was being smart enough or articulate enough or taking a stand or responding or reacting. 'You don't know what you're talking about. How dare you say that?' And then I would punch them."

The last incident happened in junior high and brought her father to the principal's office. "The reason why was these two boys had made fun of me and actually kicked me first. So my dad, being a policeman, got those two kids reprimanded. And I finally realized that taking a stand — not hitting first — was the good thing. It was just defending myself and my brothers too. I never hit first. If they came at me, I would start yapping and we would get into a scuffle and I made sure I finished the fight. I'm always very proud of that because people always think I'm so polished."

That classy demeanor is one reason Tomita seems perfect as the elegantly polished but unwavering chairman of the foundation that runs San Jose St. Bonaventure Hospital on ABC's hit "The Good Doctor." One of the show's executive producers is David Shore, best known for "House." He gave her one bit of advice about her character before filming began: "She speaks quietly, and she doesn't speak often. Because what she says

is important. She doesn't need to get messy because she's not a doctor, she's an administrator ... But when she speaks, you better listen because her word is law," he told her.

It's a new realm for Tomita, who has played a doctor more times than she can count and has co-starred in shows like "JAG" and "24."

She didn't start out to be an actress and was majoring in history at UCLA when filmmakers were searching for a girl star in "Karate Kid Part II." As queen of the Japanese Nisei Festival, Tomita was among a group of girls asked to audition for the role. "I jumped through the hoops. I met Ralph Macchio, met Jerry Weintraub, the last of the great producers, and (director) John Avildsen who passed away this year. And I got the job," she says.

It was a shock, adds Tomita. "I had no agenda. I had no desire to — I just thought it was a fine opportunity to find out how it works in Hollywood: people ask you to memorize some lines, put on a costume and act like somebody else. It was really an adventure for me."

She earned her degree and continued her acting adventure with few interruptions until her father died of leukemia at 51. "That was the roughest," she shakes her head. "My brother beneath me was stationed in Korea in the Army, and my youngest brother was a Marine about to deploy about '89-'90, the escalation of Desert Shield to Desert Storm. My mother, being a home taker-care-of, was left alone. It was really difficult," she said.

"I wasn't a very happy person, but you try to escape in watching movies or doing movies or telling stories. By God's grace, I found myself with the assistance of family."

When she first started acting, her parents gave her a year to "reassess," she says. "They wanted to protect their young daughter from the evils and the tawdriness. They didn't want me to find myself on the casting couch where my dad couldn't rescue me or my mom couldn't say, 'Did you see how that man looked?'"

Tamlyn Tomita stars as Allegra Aoki in "The Good Doctor." ABC



## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

## Fit for the New Year

Get a jump-start on burning calories before 2018 rolls in

By WINA STURGEON  
Adventure Sports Weekly

If you have a mouth and a palate, this is your season. Feasts, banquets, parties and dinners at friends' homes seem to continue without a stop. There's even a controversial, but popular, belief that most folks will gain about five pounds over the holiday season.

That belief is controversial, because actual research shows that most people gain only a pound or two. But those few pounds might still add girth, because much of it can be stored as fat. Fat doesn't weigh that much when compared to muscle or bone. So even though the scale doesn't reflect a significant weight gain, it might be a little more difficult to fasten your shirt or your jeans. You might even notice a slight increase in the muffin top hanging over your belt line, or perhaps more of a gap between shirt buttons.

Of course, everybody follows up by making a resolution for the New Year to lose weight and "get in shape" (which is a vague and meaningless phrase). But what if you didn't have to do that?

What if you didn't feast first and then afterwards, struggle to boost your metabolism to burn off the residue of the feasting you did? What if, in fact, you began to boost your metabolism right now, so that any calories consumed would be burned off before they could be stored? The result would be that you could use your resolution creativity for more worthy matters and not head to the gym in a kind of resolution panic in January.

Starting to run or spin or do resistance work mere weeks before the turn of the year will be a task requiring concentration during what's left of the busy holiday season. But think of it this way: while many of the people you know will be concentrating on sucking in their gut at work or in social occasions, your gut will not have expanded. The work you have to do to make that a reality isn't really very hard.

Here's the science: The results of your exercise doesn't

stop at the moment you stop your activity. Your body continues burning calories, sometimes for several hours, according to many studies, and also reported in an article on the popular website Livestrong.com. At the same time, you don't need to spend hours exercising to rev up your fat-burning system. Livestrong author M. Gideon Hoyle writes, "You can get some benefit from aerobic activities even if you can only exercise for 10 minutes at a time. You can get the benefit of strength-training exercises in workout sessions that last only 20 or 30 minutes."

However, one fact not mentioned in the Livestrong article is how important it is to do a warmup before starting any activity. Even five minutes of rhythmically flexing and extending your joints before exercising will help prevent microtrauma (tearing of single muscle fibers) and even more serious injuries.

More science: The lingering effect of exercise makes it clear that you should definitely do a workout on a day when you can expect to consume a lot of calories. In fact, a fairly short, but high-intensity, exercise session done just before starting to get ready for an evening out will still be burning calories as well as building muscle even as the appetizers are being served.

If you train your body to be accustomed to burning off calories rather than storing them as fat, you'll be one of the few people who have lost girth at the beginning of 2018, perhaps even going down a size or two. Then you can make a resolution to buy some new — and smaller — clothes.



Tallahassee Democrat illustration

## 5 tips to avoid weight gain during the holidays

By LESLIE BARKER  
The Dallas Morning News

Kevin Curry is a Dallas guy who has turned other guys (and women), in Dallas and otherwise, into healthy eaters and at-home chefs.

He is the founder of FitMenCook, an app that features healthy, budget-friendly recipes for men and women who want to live healthier and more active lives.

"Fitness is a lifelong journey, and I could not imagine a life of eating boring, bland food just to be healthy," Curry says.

While hard work and remaining active are vital, "in the end, it all comes down to diet," Curry writes on his website, FitMenCook.com.

True, working out is very important. But as he found out in his quest to go from an overweight guy with rising blood pressure to a trim and healthy one, exercising till the cows come home won't do much good — not if what you're eating is a fatty, salty, processed mess.

So who better to get us off our divinity-day mindset than Curry? Voila: His tips.

**Keep healthy snacks on hand**  
His go-tos? Plain or lightly salted nuts and seeds; lean jerky, preferably with pepper or spice; dried fruits, which are "excellent sources of energy."

**Explore**  
If you're traveling (or even if you're not), check out what's past the front door. Walk, hike, see if there's a pretty park nearby.

**Hydrate**  
Water or unsweetened tea will check cravings so you'll consume fewer calories. Or nosh on such water-filled fruits and vegetables as celery, grapefruit and berries.

**Mobilize**  
Climb stairs, find restaurants within walking distance. Work out first thing in the morning to rev up your calorie burn for the rest of the day.

**Motivate**  
Remind yourself why you do what you do. Meaning, he says, "if you're wanting to lose weight, think of something you can take with you while you travel to remind yourself of that goal." A photo, maybe, or a text from someone you love. "Surround yourself with things to keep you focused, yet balanced, on your goals. And go for the 'gold star.'"



## WEEKEND: FAMILY

## More than one path

College isn't the answer for all students

**Pioneer Press**  
When Ben Matejka of New Trier High School in Winnetka, Ill., got his results from the ACT, he was pleased with his score of 27, comfortably above the national average of about 21.

But when Ben told his friends, some of their responses took him aback. He got condolences.

"There's definitely a level of 'this is what my friends are getting,' but I knew I should not be comparing myself to others, but comparing myself to myself," said Matejka, 18, a recent graduate, who this fall started his freshman year at the University of Denver.

The belief that students at elite public high schools like New Trier must do more than just "good" on college admissions tests is one example of how kids are told there is only one pathway to success.

But going to an Ivy League school, or even a four-year university, isn't achievable — or desirable — for every student, experts say. Labeling their failures blocks them from seeking nontraditional educational and career pathways, and leads to stress and anxiety.

Patrick McGrath, a clinical psychologist, has made a career of talking to kids and their parents about anxiety, stress and school. He said he often begins presentations to parents by asking, "How many of you are OK with your child being average?"

No one raises their hand, he said. "These are your typical suburban parents," said McGrath, the director of Amita Health Alexian Brother's Center for Anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders in Hoffman Estates, Ill. "I tell them, 'If you're wondering why there's so much pressure on kids, there it is.'"

While some high school students are well-suited for a rigorous science-and-math-heavy curriculum, other teens don't excel on the traditional college preparatory path.

Experts say that while these teens are often as bright as their peers on the academic honor roll, their talents and learning styles are a better match for alternative educational pathways that can reduce stress in the short term and lead to rewarding and well-paying careers down the road.

Lianne Musser, a college coordinator at Lyons Township High School in La Grange, Ill., said that instead of automatically applying to four-year universities, more students should be open to other options.

"Right now everyone is expected to go to college," Musser said. "The expectation is the manager at the Starbucks has to have a college degree."

While Musser said that while all students need some post-secondary education, depending on the teen's interests and abilities, they might want to consider an apprenticeship or training at a technical school.

"For some, that is a better fit," Musser said. "Students are some-



STACEY WESCOTT/Chicago Tribune

**Alexander Vondersitt uses cedar for projects in an advanced woodworking class at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Ill.**

how convinced that if they don't get a college degree, they'll never make any money."

But Musser said that is a myth, as there are lots of well-paying jobs in the culinary arts, automotive industry, electronics or other trades that do not require a four-year degree. At Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Ill., longtime applied technology teacher Steve Silca has 230 students enrolled in his popular woodworking program, which includes several class levels, from basic to advanced.

"My students make 450 pieces of furniture each year, from bookcases and tables, to coffee tables and chests," Silca said. "I think for the vast majority of my students, they look at their woodworking class as one of their favorites. It's calming to them, and contributes to their well-ness during the school day."

Educational options do exist for kids looking to explore other career paths. The Lake County High Schools Technology Campus in Grayslake, Ill., draws juniors and seniors from two dozen high schools for classes that either lead directly to jobs or give students a head start on career training at the College of Lake County or a four-year institution. The fields include, among others, automotive service and collision repair; introductory policing and criminal justice; firefighting and emergency medical services; medical assisting and certified nurse assisting; culinary arts; and 3D gaming, app development, game

programming and virtualization.

Derrick Burress, principal of the Lake County technology campus, acknowledged that there remains a stigma attached to vocational education, even though in reality, the courses prepare students for both college and careers.

"When I talk to parents and stakeholders, I tell them that the word 'vocational' itself means a calling," Burress said.

At Arlington Heights, Ill.-based Township High School District 214, Supt. David Schuler has launched an initiative called "Redefining Ready!" that aims to transform the way schools across the U.S. measure their students' readiness for college and careers.

Instead of schools relying on one standardized test score — typically the ACT or SAT — to gauge a student's readiness for college and beyond, Schuler's initiative proposes that schools use multiple measurements, including completion of Advanced Placement and dual credit courses, AP exam scores, community service hours, career interest identification and co-curricular participation.

Schuler said it's crucial to recognize that some of the best students are not the best test-takers.

"I think a lot of the anxiety that exists in education is because many systems are still operating the way adults learned when they were kids, which is not the way kids learn today," Schuler said.

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Holiday cheer doesn't always look familiar

I'm grateful that our last tour in the Navy landed us in New England, where the scenery looks like a Currier and Ives dinner plate come to life. I love the frosty chill in the December air, the smell of cut timber and pine boughs, the feel of warm woolen mittens. Here, the holiday spirit finds me, draws me in and captures me. And I gladly surrender.

But it hasn't always been this easy. For most military families like ours, frequent moves are an unavoidable part of life. And at some point, Uncle Sam stations you somewhere that looks and feels completely foreign. Since holidays are all about tradition, the absence of those traditions can leave you longing for the holidays you grew up with back home.

I was raised in an idyllic small town in the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania, where Christmas was traditional and classic, just like in the movies. Finding holiday spirit was as easy as waking up in my twin bed with the Kliban Cat sheets, scratching a peephole out of the intricate frost that had formed on the window overnight and staring out at the winter wonderland right outside.

With dissolved candy canes coursing through my veins, I'd grab the parka handed down from my brother and head for the hill behind our house. The kids in our neighborhood would ruthlessly pelt each other with snowballs, eat gritty icicles broken off the gutters, and sled down the hill until our numbed cheeks couldn't feel our running noses.

With a warm sludge of hot cocoa and fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies in my belly, I'd thaw before a roaring fire, staring up at the screw-in lights on our tree. There was one bulb in particular, a transparent magenta, which seemed to emit pure, saturated hot-pink splendor infinitely refracted by sparkling silver tinsel. I was hypnotized by its magical brilliance and overflowed with anticipation and awe.

Four decades later, I was sitting in a north Florida Starbucks in mid-December, feeling the blues.

Our family was stationed at Naval Station Mayport, and despite my surroundings of trendy Starbucks holiday decor and the fact that the manager had set the central air at a frigid 60-odd degrees, it just didn't feel like Christmas to me.

After I got my venti latte's worth of free Wi-Fi, I moped out into the subtropical 75-degree Florida winter and headed for my minivan. I didn't have to put on a coat or scrape any ice off my windshield. I drove back to our base house on roads clear of salt and ash. At home, I opened the windows to let in the ocean breeze. After walking the dog on the white sand beach that ran along the east side of our housing area, I slumped into a lawn chair in our palm-tree-studded backyard.

"Woe is me," I thought, and as I worked on my tan, I wallowed shamelessly in self-pity.

Later that week, I was back at Starbucks. As I sat in the trendy coffee shop buzzing with flip-flop-festooned and Ray-Ban-bedecked Floridians, I wondered how they could stand it.

Suddenly, I heard the ring of the cash register and realized that it reminded me of jingle bells. I took notice of the lovely cranberry red hue of the Florida Seminoles t-shirt worn by the man sitting next to me. I sipped my latte and detected a hint of cinnamon. And then I looked up at the trendy pendant light hanging overhead and was drawn in by the pure, saturated blue of its glowing cobalt shade. I was mesmerized.

"Merry Christmas," the man in the cranberry Seminoles shirt uttered as he got up from our shared table to leave, snapping me out of my hypnotic gaze. In that moment, I realized that holiday spirit comes in all shapes, sizes, colors, locations and climates, but I had been too clouded by my own narrow expectations to see it.

"Merry Christmas to you, too!" I eagerly replied to the festive gentleman, relieved that I had finally seen the light.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com)  
Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com)

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### SHELL GAME

BY DAVID STEINBERG / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS
- 1 Browns

7 Four-hit achievement, in baseball lingo

12 Mill posts

15 System used at Gallaudet Univ.

18 The U.S., in Mexico

20 Milo of "Romeo and Juliet," 1968

21 Hawaii's \_\_\_\_ Day

22 Low

23 "Et tu?" and others

25 Lotion ingredients

26 Suburb of Chicago

28 Joyful internet cry

29 Bubbly mixer

31 Popeye's boy

33 Harassed, in a sense

34 Cartoon seller of Squishees

35 Pyrex glass marking

38 Jackson 5 member

39 Philip who wrote "Portnoy's Complaint"

41 Cain and Abel's younger brother

42 Word before questions or advice

43 Do sales work, informally

44 A part of

45 Band with the 1989 platinum debut album "Junta"

47 Darryl, in the comic "Baby Blues"

49 Accomplishing

51 Poke around

54 The "K" in Kmart

59 Places for plugs

62 Plastic-dispenser producer

65 The clue for 126-Down, if this shell game

68 Hardly giddy

69 Group of pros

71 "Rights of Man" author, 1791

72 Early Cuzco dweller

73 Series of mistakes?

74 Vacation spot

77 Inside-dope source

80 Prefix with business

81 Chilled

83 With 13-Down, herbal brew

85 Cartoon seller of Duff Beer

86 The clue for 127-Across, if this shell game

90 Former N.F.L.'ers

91 All together

93 Shapes of some Halloween cookies

94 Country united in 1990

96 Soft-drink options

98 A peeling place?

100 Westernmost of the ABC Islands

103 "Bug"

105 Hosp. worker

107 Prefix with caching

109 2.5, for the set {1, 2, 3, 4}

112 Classic sculpture

114 Novel narrated by a soon-to-be mutineer

115 Material for small buildings?

118 Proctor's warning

119 Students often take them out

121 When some bars close

122 Edict

124 End in \_\_\_\_

125 Style influenced by Cubism

127 Like hand motions during a shell game

129 Professional group with a van

131 Month of l'année

132 Singer legend

133 Four-time World Series-winning manager

134 In the near future

135 Superfund org.

136 Something to build on

137 Looks fabulous, in slang

138 Pincher

17 Underground locale

19 Give a ring while on the road?

24 Tizzy

27 Typical Vanidades reader

30 How many TV shows are shown

32 Port, is part of it

36 One caring for a bébé

37 Classical poem

40 Email openers

41 Egghead?

46 Deceitful sort

48 Grp. with lots of pointers

50 Like the verbs "eat" and "drink": Abbr.

52 Beocat relative

53 Fund-raising org.

55 Fair

56 Warm up for a bout, say

57 Bug

58 Ages and ages

60 With politesse

61 They're symbolized by slashes

62 Minecraft or StarCraft

63 Fantasy novel hero who rides the dragon

64 Capital 175 miles east of Venice, Italy

66 Lottery winner's cry

67 Record again

70 Demean \_\_\_\_

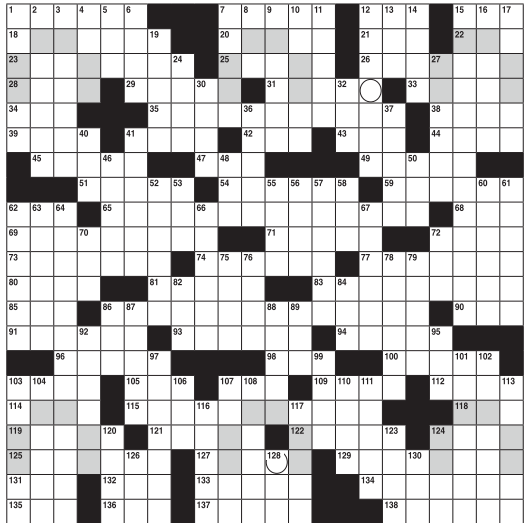
72 Philosophy-class suffix

75 Marc of fashion

76 Follows a pattern?

### DOWN

- 1 England and Spain fought one in 1588
- 2 Smirnoff Ice, e.g.
- 3 Lacking polish
- 4 Push
- 5 Verbal stumbles
- 6 Walks or runs, for short
- 7 Work together
- 8 Fashion inits.
- 9 Elected
- 10 Degree of freedom
- 11 Lights
- 12 Like hounds and some bunny rabbits
- 13 See 83-Across
- 14 Guru, maybe
- 15 "Pretty cool, huh?"
- 16 Johannesburg neighborhood much in the news during apartheid



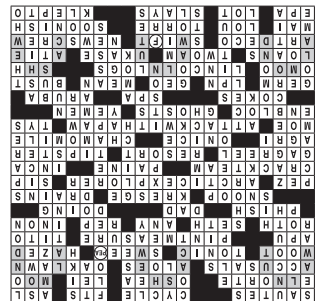
- 78 Much-covered 1955 Bo Diddley hit
- 79 Juice
- 82 Verb often said three times in a row
- 84 It's cut and dried
- 86 All right
- 87 Immune-system component
- 88 "Let's do this thing!"
- 89 Amt. of seasoning
- 92 Loch on the border of the Highlands
- 95 Worn-down pencil
- 99 One way to run
- 101 Greyhound offering
- 102 Most visibly frightened
- 103 Develop a limp
- 104 Hybrid music genre of the 2010s
- 106 Houston-to-Dallas dir.
- 107 Desert, in a way
- 108 City west of Binghamton
- 110 Pulitzer-winning novelist Jennifer
- 111 Total jerks
- 113 Group with Two Top 10 rock operas
- 116 Runs to
- 117 They have long necks and round bodies
- 120 Bear's advice
- 123 Beatitude creature in sci-fi
- 124 Oil crisis?
- 126 Mummur
- 128 Cook in oil
- 130 Only three-letter scale note

## GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at [gunstonstreet@yahoo.com](mailto:gunstonstreet@yahoo.com), and visit [gunstonstreet.com](http://gunstonstreet.com).

## RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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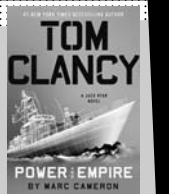
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Stripes Book Club

Jack Ryan is dealing with an aggressive challenge from the Chinese government. Pawns are being moved around a global chessboard: an attack on an oil platform in Africa, a terrorist strike on an American destroyer and a storm tossed American spy ship that may fall into Chinese hands. But there are hints that there's even more going on behind the scenes.



## FACES

## Together again

James Roday and Dule Hill reteam for 'Psych: The Movie'

By ALICIA RANCILIO  
Associated Press

**D**ule Hill was searching for the right word to sum up how it felt that some original crew members from his series "Psych" turned down other jobs to work on "Psych: The Movie."

"I think that is a ..." he began.

"Testament," interrupted his co-star, James Roday. "I knew where you were at."

And that pretty much sums up the rapport between the two actors who played best friends and screwball crime solvers for eight years on their USA series.

Their shorthand and chemistry was a large part of the show's appeal, plus running gags like how a pineapple was strategically placed in each episode like a "Where's Waldo?" game to keep fans invested. The series went off the air in 2014, but the crew is back for a two-hour TV movie.

"We didn't want to come back so soon that we hadn't been missed, but we also didn't want to wait too long so that we had been forgotten," said Roday of finding the sweet spot to return.

"This was the year that seemed the most right and the planets aligned and everybody's scheduled worked out."



**Associated Press: Do you recall how you first met?**

**Dule Hill:** I went in for a meeting ... You and I read there. We read the scene together. It's actually funny because he was hired for the job, we had the chemistry read, it was nice. Good vibe.

**James Roday:** So we thought it would be a good idea to get together and because I had already been cast I thought it would be a nice gesture to go to Dule, to his home. We could rehearse there. I thought that was a standup, solid guy who already has the job, thing to do. I expected him to live somewhere in the general area (of Los Angeles), but he lived way the hell out (laughs).

**Hill:** You'd think since he already had

the job it would be like, 'Oh, let me come to you.' There was none of that. I was like, 'Thank you for coming by; I appreciate it.' (Laughter.)

**Did you have that quick banter right away?**

**Hill:** I had just come from doing 'The West Wing' and Aaron Sorkin is: What is written is what you say. I get into the read with this dude, and he's just all over the place.

**Roday:** To watch this guy come in and to think about (where he came from) and see some of the stuff that he was doing at the end of our show, talk about a journey. I watched this guy bloom into a comedic powerhouse.

**Did anything come from you guys just joking around that made it into the show?**

**Hill:** Oh, man. What hasn't?

**Roday:** We decided that we were huge fans of Ed Lover's 'C'mon, Son!' viral videos and worked that in.

**Hill:** That only happened because I was in my trailer watching the video and I showed it to Roday and he was crying (laughing) and then we had to go do a scene and he goes, 'C'mon, son.' And I go, 'Don't do Ed Lover on me.'

**Will there be more reunions like this?**

**Another movie, perhaps?**

**Hill:** If I had 10 pineapples to bet, I'd probably bet all 10.

**Roday:** If we can keep it to two-hour specials every year or two, then I feel pretty confident we'll always be able to give fans the level of 'Psych' they are entitled to.

James Roday, left, and Dule Hill are the stars of the TV film "Psych: The Movie." It's on AFN-Spectrum on Friday.

AMY SUSSMAN, INVISION/AP

## Jeffrey Tambor says he hasn't actually quit Amazon series 'Transparent'

wire reports

"Transparent" star Jeffrey Tambor hasn't left the role of Maura Pfefferman—at least, not yet.

Tambor, 73, is facing three accusations from colleagues, but the status of the critically acclaimed Amazon series remains in limbo as an investigation into his behavior presses on.

The Emmy winner led many to believe he'd quit the show with a statement released shortly after the first allegations surfaced.

"Playing Maura Pfefferman on 'Transparent' has been one of the greatest privileges and creative experiences of my life. What has become clear over the past weeks, however, is that this is no longer the job I signed up for four years ago," he told Deadline. "Given the politicized atmosphere that seems to have afflicted our set, I don't see how I can return to 'Transparent.'"

Amazon is investigating harassment claims against Tambor.

Though his intention seemed clear, a representative for Tambor told the New York Times that the actor did not have any plans to quit the show. "What he said was that given the toxic atmosphere and the politicization on the set, it's very hard for him to see how he can possibly return. But no final decision for next year has been made, either by Jeffrey or by Amazon," the rep said.

## Ex-DJ says \$1 payment sent

A former radio DJ who was ordered to pay a symbolic \$1 to Taylor Swift for groping her at a photo op says he mailed her a Sacagawea coin last week.

David Mueller provided a letter to The Associated Press showing the payment was sent Nov. 28. Mueller previously told the AP he intended the coin featuring a

prominent Native American woman as a final jab at the singer in a case her side called a win for all women.

Swift was among the "Silence Breakers" named as Time magazine's person of the year. In a story published Wednesday, she said she hadn't received the dollar.

## Other news

■ Medical examiners in Las Vegas have determined that comic **Ralphie May's** death was from high blood pressure and heart disease. Clark County Coroner John Fudenberg told the AP on Wednesday the comedian whose body was found Oct. 6 at a home in Las Vegas died of heart failure due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease. The death was ruled natural.

■ **The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences** has announced its first code of conduct for its more than 8,400 members. Film academy chief executive

Dawn Hudson introduced the new rules to members in an email Wednesday. The new code of conduct stipulates that the academy is no place for "people who abuse their status, power or influence in a manner that violates standards of decency." The academy's board may now suspend or expel those who violate the code of conduct or who "compromise the integrity" of the academy.

■ Oscar winner **Sally Field** is writing a memoir. The actress has an agreement with Grand Central Publishing for "In Pieces," scheduled for next fall.

■ Novelist and critic **William Gass**, 93, died Wednesday at his home in St. Louis, publisher Alfred A. Knopf announced. No cause of death was available. A leading experimental writer of the 1960s and '70s, Gass wrote influential works of fiction such as "Omenseiter's Luck" and won literary prizes for his works of criticism.



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## OPINION

## Trump heats up the Mideast – but why now?

By MARTIN SCHRAM

Tribune News Service

Things were never hotter in the White House's lesser-known oval-shaped room, the one down in the basement, than they were for 11 minutes Wednesday afternoon.

And that's really saying a lot. Because long before that oval room was elegantly repurposed into its present function as the White House Diplomatic Room, it housed the White House's huge roomer's furnace. On just about every December day, from 1837 to 1902, it would have been pumping heat throughout the gleaming white mansion.

But Wednesday, starting at 1 p.m. and lasting just 11 minutes, the old furnace room generated a very different sort of heat – a blazing hot controversy that flashed around the world with incendiary consequences. President Donald Trump stood in the Diplomatic Room and delivered a message that seemed to instantly fire up passions and tempers throughout the Middle East.

If you were to just read his words literally, you might well wonder what the fuss and fury were all about. Because the words Trump spoke, in and of themselves, could conceivably be read as a hopeful, positive message – if those who had been spoken at the end of a month-long diplomatic process that was thoughtfully conceived and carefully executed to intelligently persuade the region's players to want to consider entering a new era of prospective peacemaking.

By ELI LAKE

Bloomberg View

A year ago, when Donald Trump's transition team first said they intended to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, I was skeptical. Like most of the foreign policy establishment, not to mention America's Arab and European allies, I thought such a move was too risky.

You will see that argument a lot today. Israel needs U.S. help in strengthening its blossoming relationships with Arab states that were once its foes. Why risk straining those ties with a largely symbolic move?

I have since changed my mind. There are a few reasons. To start, that column came out right before the outgoing administration broke precedent and abstained from a U.N. Security Council resolution that said all of East Jerusalem was effectively occupied territory. This would mean any Israeli construction within the disputed territory was a violation of international law. Barack Obama's parting gift to the Palestinians made U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital more urgent.

But what really changed my mind was this summer's metal detector uprising. Here's what happened: Israeli Arabs began a rampage near the mosque that sits atop the Temple Mount, an area that contains the remains of the outer wall of the Second Jewish Temple at its base and Al Aqsa Mosque on top. The gunmen then fled into the esplanade around the mosque and began firing back at Israeli police officers from within the holy compound.

It was a chaotic scene, full of rage and cynicism. While Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas condemned the terrorists, his political party, Fatah, also called for "days of rage." Was this in response to the gunmen at Al Aqsa? No, it was because Israel sought to place metal detectors at the Al Aqsa compound, following a January shooting in Jerusalem that was blamed on a Palestinian police officer. This was after Israeli police found

But no. This was a Trump thing; so there was none of that advance stuff. It all just erupted as if it were a helter-skelter happenstance. Trump decided to instantly declare the United States was recognizing that Israel's capital is Jerusalem (a designation that presumably includes East Jerusalem, which Israel seized from Jordan in 1967 when all its neighbors were plotting to push Israel into the sea). Also, Trump said he has begun plans to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv (where all the world's embassies are) to Jerusalem.

So Trump used nice words to say he was just recognizing reality – as his idea of promoting a new era of peace. But his words triggered a predictable Arab reaction that ran the gamut from rage to outrage. The Palestinians told the world to prepare for three days of "rage."

Trump began by telling us what all the world knows (but all the world's statespersons diplomatically don't dwell upon). Jerusalem is where Israel's Knesset, prime ministers and presidents work; Tel Aviv is where all the embassies are. In 1953, Congress passed a law saying the U.S. Embassy should be in Jerusalem. So all presidents since routinely signed waivers putting off the move.

"Some say they lacked courage but they made their best judgments based on facts as they understood them at the time," Trump said. "I have more than two decades of waivers, we are no closer to a lasting peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. ... While previous presidents have made this a major campaign promise, they failed to deliver."

weapons stored in the mosque compound.

The traditional way to understand this episode is that it proves how much the U.S. has changed its position on the tinderbox the Jerusalem issue is. Don't pour gasoline on burning embers. Already Palestinians in Gaza have begun "days of rage" in protest of Trump's decision. The Organization of the Islamic Conference called Trump's plan to recognize Jerusalem an act of "naked aggression." The State Department has warned recognition will bring violence.

But official American neutrality on Jerusalem has not stopped Palestinian leaders from exercising a riot veto before. Indeed, neutrality has created a moral hazard.

Just look at the conditions that led to the Second Intifada in 2000. The official justification for that uprising was the visit by Ariel Sharon, before his election as prime minister, to the Temple Mount. But that was a pretext. As Palestinian Media Watch has documented, Yasser Arafat, the late Palestinian leader, had already planned the Second Intifada before the first round of Oslo negotiations under President Bill Clinton collapsed, weeks before Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. As the Palestinian Authority's former communications minister, Imad Faluji, said in a private speech in December 2000: "Whoever thinks that the Intifada was a result of the visit of Ariel Sharon to Al Aqsa Mosque is mistaken. That was only the straw breaking the Palestinian people's patience. This Intifadah was already planned since the President returned from the recent talks at Camp David."

So what was America's reaction to all of this? Clinton's final months in office, the official line from the U.S. government was for both sides to ease tensions, as he frantically tried to restart the collapsed peace negotiations. Under Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, the position was pretty much the same. It was not until 2002, when the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council resolution from Iran to the Palestinian Authority, that

"Trump, I am delivering."

Today's top national security advisers reportedly counseled against making this sudden unilateral move. Israel's government loved it but all other U.S. allies counseled against it. So did Pope Francis. All warned of bloodshed and that America was diminishing its ability to broker a settlement. But Trump did it his way, anyway.

But why now? Why did Trump feel he needed to act as he did, at this precise moment – when all was relatively quiet on the Israeli-Palestinian front, against the advice of just about everyone (except Israel)? Here in the wide, wide world of punditry, all analysts began to feel as if they had just fallen through the looking glass. Talking heads and tweeting hawks began to recycle diplomatic doublespeak doubletalk.

I think you can continue to argue to hang this time, I believe that I understand why Trump took this action at this moment. Special counsel Robert Mueller has scored a major success in convicting retired Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump's first national security adviser, who is apparently now cooperating with the probe. Trump knows what else might be discovered. And that probably explains Trump's recent uneven actions that sometimes appear to be borderline panic.

Trump clearly wanted to deflect our attention away from Mueller's Russia probe. I believe that's why he chose this moment to fulfill his risky 2016 campaign promise to Israel.

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive.

## Trump's move frees Palestinians to focus on peace

Bush decided to cut off Arafat and call for new elections. That did not stop the Bush administration from continuing to push the peace process. That same year, Bush became the first U.S. president to call for an independent Palestinian state.

None of this is to say the Palestinians do not have real grievances. They do. Palestinians still live under occupation in the West Bank and blockade in Gaza. Israel detains thousands of people in military prisons where they are not afforded free trials. Restrictions on movement and checkpoints make daily life a grinding burden.

But it does show that Western sensitivity to Jerusalem has allowed Palestinian leaders to weaponize the issue. Palestinians are fed a steady stream of propaganda about the danger to Jerusalem. Even Abbas, who has authorized cooperation with the Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank, has given speeches warning about Jewish plans to enter Al Aqsa and Jerusalem's holy sites. That's not to say that secular have continued to call on both sides to negotiate.

And that's the real danger of sticking to the policy of Jerusalem neutrality. It feeds a Palestinian illusion: With enough patience and rage, one day the Jews will be evicted from their cities and the land will begin to happen. And as more Arab states come to rely on Israel in the regional war against Iran and its proxies, this fact is becoming more visible to the rest of the region.

Under Trump's predecessor, Obama aides used to say they were giving Israel tough love. They said a real friend would allow Israel to keep expanding settlements when eventually there needs to be a two-state solution. Trump is doing something like this for the Palestinians. A real friend won't allow Palestinian leaders to keep promising to liberate a city that is the capital of its peace partner. That straight talk should not be the end of peace talks, but the beginning.

Eli Lake is a Bloomberg View columnist.

## OPINION

# What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

## Trump lawyer's credulity rises

### The New York Times

You know you have a problem when you've been president for less than 11 months and you're already relying on Richard Nixon's definition of what's legal. On Monday morning, Axios reported that President Donald Trump's top personal lawyer, John Dowd, said in an interview that the "president cannot obstruct justice because he is the chief law enforcement officer" under the Constitution and "has every right to express his view of any case."

This will come as news to Congress, which has passed laws criminalizing the obstruction of justice and decided twice in the last four decades that when a president violates those laws he has committed an impeachable offense.

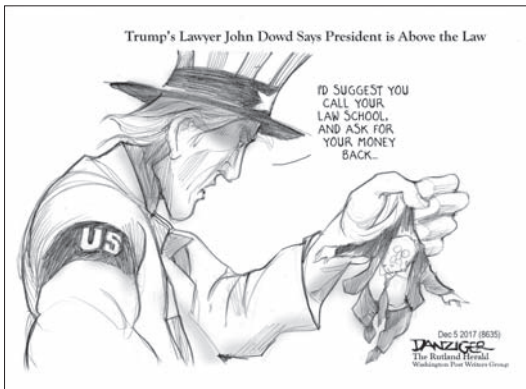
In 1974, the first article of impeachment drafted by the House of Representatives charged President Nixon with "interfering or endeavoring to interfere with the conduct of investigations by the Department of Justice of the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the office of Watergate Special Prosecution Force, a quasi-judicial national security adviser, for lying to FBI agents about his communications with Russian officials late last year, Trump tweeted, "I had to fire General Flynn because he lied to the Vice President and the FBI."

Recall that the original justification for Flynn's firing was simply that he had misled Vice President Mike Pence; otherwise he had done nothing wrong. That's the case Trump made the day after Flynn's firing, when he allegedly tried to shut down the FBI's inquiry into his campaign's connections with Russian officials by firing James Comey, who was then the FBI director, in a private Oval Office meeting, "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go."

In May, Trump fired Comey, telling Russian officials in the Oval Office the next day, "I am sure you have already heard 'great pressure' on him, my referring to Comey as a 'nut job.' In an interview with NBC, Trump said, "When I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, 'You know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story.'"

It had to be enough for the president to attempt to interfere in any way with a law enforcement investigation of one of his top aides. But with Saturday's tweet, Trump admitted that he knew Flynn had committed a federal crime at the time he fired Comey for refusing to stop investigating him. ... [I]t seems so clear that Trump is admitting to "interfering or endeavoring to interfere with the conduct of investigations" and to "impeding the administration of justice."

Dowd confused the country further by saying he had drafted Trump's tweet himself — a bizarre claim for a lawyer to make about a statement that incriminates his cli-



ent. Then he outdid himself with his assertion to Axios that it is not possible for the president to obstruct justice. The argument as far as it goes, is that the president is the nation's highest ranking law enforcement officer and has the constitutional authority to supervise and control the executive branch, which includes making decisions about investigations and personnel.

But Trump didn't just try to shut down some random no-name case; he tried to shut down an investigation into his own campaign's ties to the Russian government's efforts to swing the 2016 election in his favor. As that investigation keeps revealing, Trump's top associates have repeatedly been untruthful about their contacts and communications with Russian officials.

In Saturday's tweet, Trump also wrote: "It is a shame because his actions during the transition were lawful. There was nothing to hide!" If there were truly nothing to hide, if these talks with Russians were all just part of a normal presidential transition process, then why all the lying?

Any child could tell you the answer: People lie when they know they've done something wrong.

For some historical perspective, Richard Nixon once again proves useful. In the closing days of the 1968 presidential campaign, Nixon ordered H.R. Haldeman, later his chief of staff, to throw a "monkey wrench" into the Vietnamese peace talks, knowing that a serious move to end the war would hurt his electoral prospects. Nixon denied that he did this to the grave; Haldeman's notes, discovered after his death, revealed the truth.

Meanwhile, as the evidence of both subterfuge and obstruction continues to grow, Trump's tireless spinners and sophists are working to convince the American public that it's all no big deal. This is an embarrassing and unpersuasive argument, but it's not surprising. At this point, they have nothing else to work with.

## Backing Moore puts party last

### Boston Herald

Well, it's official. In today's Republican Party winning is everything.

As Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore's poll numbers stabilized, President Donald Trump went all in and the Republican National Committee soon followed, once again opening up its coffers to one of the most morally bankrupt contenders to seek the White House.

"We want strong borders, we want stopping crime," Trump said Tuesday in support of Moore. "We want to have the things that we represent, and we certainly don't want a liberal Democrat that's controlled by Nancy Pelosi and controlled by Chuck Schumer. We don't want to have that for Alabama."

The fact that the guy faces accusations of sexual misconduct with two teens, ages 14 and 16, and efforts to date other teens when he was a 30-year-old district attorney seems not to bother the Trump wing of the Republican Party. That Moore has more recently called the women making the accusations liars — cards and a yearbook with his notes and signature notwithstanding — compounds his offenses.

There are still a few voices of reason in the GOP, former Massachusetts Gov. and former presidential contender Mitt Romney among them.

"Roy Moore in the US Senate would be a stain on the GOP and on the nation. Leigh Corfman and other victims are courageous heroes. No vote, no majority is worth losing our honor, our integrity," Romney tweeted Monday.

Trump and the RNC pulled out all the stops on Moore's behalf even as Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich, announced his imminent retirement in the wake of allegations of sexual misconduct. Conyers, the oldest-serving member of the House, was under enormous pressure from his Democratic colleagues to not further embarrass them. Senate Republicans, on the other hand, will have ample time to contemplate their future — should Moore win his race next week — as the party without a moral core, the party that will overlook both sexual misconduct and a complete disrespect for the law (the reason Moore was twice thrown off the court in Alabama). Many voters will see that as winning the battle but losing the war.

## Wildfires' burning questions

### Los Angeles Times

Wildfires have been a part of the California ecosystem since long before modern settlement, let alone the exurban sprawl that brings housing and development into fire-prone areas. We tend to deal with the possibility of raging wildfires abstractly.

Local governments do a little planning, fire departments offer advice on clearing brush and other flammables from property, insurers sell policies to cover our losses if a fire actually burns our homes and businesses to the ground. But the next steps don't prepare us for the violent reality.

The fire currently raging in Ventura County (the Thomas fire) and the one in foothill neighborhoods around Sylmar in the San Fernando Valley (the Creek fire) are breathtaking in two ways: the sheer power of the wind-driven fire, and the devastation, whether by scrub brush or mansions, and the fragility of human life in the face of it. ...

There will be time for assessments after these firestorms subside. Were they natural or human-caused? Would better zoning limit exposure? Do we have sufficient capacity to fight so many fires at once? Are

there better building materials we should be using to limit fire damage? For the time being, we must focus on evacuating where prudent, getting firefighters the support they need to protect as much property as possible without endangering themselves needlessly, and hope that the destruction we've already seen stands as the peak of this outbreak, and not just the opening act. Once the wine cools and fires, which killed 44 people, turned Santa Rosa neighborhoods to ash and damaged or destroyed more than \$3 billion in property, serve as a sober warning of how bad this can get.

What should make Southern California fearful is that climate change could mean a future of more frequent and more intense wildfires. Today's fires will end, and what we do afterward — assessing how to better prepare, and how and whether to rebuild — will influence the damage from the fires next time.

## Victims need schools' support

### Tampa Bay Times of St. Petersburg, Fla.

Faced with a student's lawsuit over sexual assault, the University of South Florida is struggling with an issue that is raging across the campus nationwide. The case raises concerns about how well USF has protected and supported a woman who felt victimized by a fellow student, in turn putting a focus on its overall handling of sexual assault complaints. USF should use this moment to reevaluate its practices to ensure it is doing enough to help victims while protecting the rights of the accused.

Samantha Garrett, 26, a doctoral student, said she was sexually assaulted last fall by another student in her psychology program. About three weeks passed before Garrett told a professor about the attack — delays in reporting sexual assaults are not unusual — and the school launched an investigation. The accused student, Andrew Thurston, was found responsible for violating the student code of conduct for "non-consensual intercourse and non-consensual sexual contact." As Times staff writer, D-Nich reported last week, Thurston was given the choice of a formal hearing or accepting sanctions. He chose the sanctions, which his attorney says does not equate to admitting responsibility. He denies the allegations and has not been charged with a crime.

The case underscores both the delicate balance schools must strike in seeking justice in such cases and the importance of their role separate from the criminal justice system. Accusations of criminal conduct should be handled by the police and the courts. But criminal cases can fall apart for many reasons, and sexual assault cases are no exception. In such cases, schools are often no witnesses other than the accuser and the accused. If time has elapsed, there may be no physical evidence.

The federal anti-discrimination law known as Title IX requires colleges and universities to protect students from discrimination on the basis of sex. Therefore, colleges can make accommodations for course work, providing mental health services or allowing a transfer to a different class or dorm to separate alleged victims and perpetrators.

This is where USF's response to Garrett seemed to have faltered. The sanctions Thurston accepted, according to the lawsuit, were a deferred suspension through May 2018, allowing him to continue his studies on campus; two meetings with a university official; and a request that he "refrain from making contact" with Garrett. So Garrett may continue facing the same person in the hallways, classrooms and classrooms. As a result, she says, she has experienced panic attacks and dropped three classes. That does not sound like equal access to education. ...

Universities have an obligation to protect equal access to education. It's no easy charge, and USF's conduct is constantly striving to be responsive, decisive and fair.

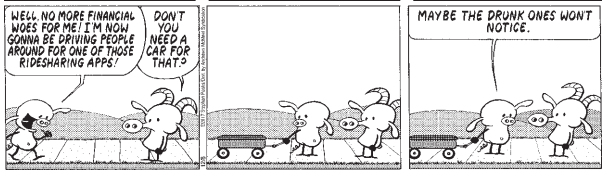
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Pearls Before Swine



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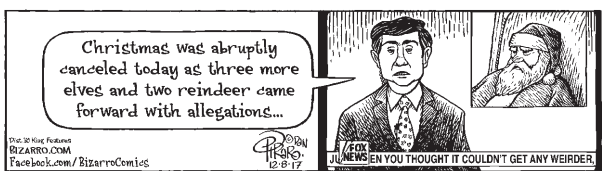
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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46					47					48		
49					50					51		

## ACROSS

- State VIP
- Punch
- Note from the boss
- Dodge, as work
- Flair
- Showtime
- drama starring Paul Giamatti
- Pickling herb
- School session
- Devoutness
- Thump
- Grand tale
- Partially mine
- Rounds of applause
- Undivided
- Proposed to propose
- By way of
- Intense feelings
- Lend a hand
- Tivo
- predecessors
- Drills
- Bo of "10"
- Columnist
- Maureen
- Wicked
- Personal views
- Karate level
- Split apart
- Formerly called

- Sloth's home
- Transcript stats
- "Mangial"
- Buddies
- about (roughly)
- Exaggerated
- Cleopatra's river
- Easy targets
- Go for a field goal
- Willow
- Met Your Mother
- Dog biscuit shapes
- Arrears
- Always
- Anger
- Prima donna
- URL ending
- "Troy" actor Brad
- Domino spot
- Museum-funding org.
- Filming site

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	R	E	S		R	A	W		T	E	L	L
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## 12-8

## CRYPTOQUIP

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SPVDHTA HT SUY PBYTS FJ P  
BHS G HT NPRUHTASFT: P  
ROFDPTY -NFWC PVZMI.  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE COLD TEMPERATURE IS PERFECT FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR. I'M SURE BEYOND A SEASONABLE DOUBT.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals P



Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



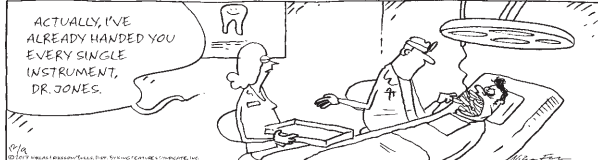
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Candorville



Carpe Diem



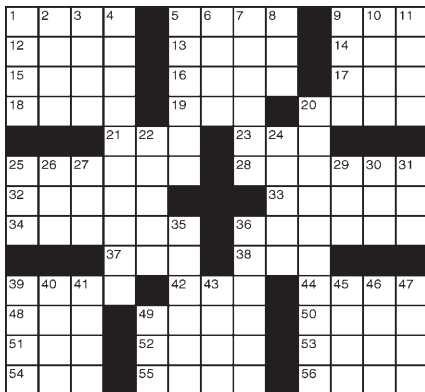
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



### ACROSS

1 Not many

5 Inlet

9 Sailor

12 "For — jolly good ..."

13 Border on

14 Mimic

15 And others (Lat.)

16 Loathsome

17 Cartoon frame

18 Manhandle

19 List-ending abbr.

20 Squarish

21 Part of TNT

23 Lawyers' gp.

25 Butterfly

28 Sweet drink

32 Swim stroke

33 Curly-tailed dog

34 Jordan's

neighbor

36 Chicken serving

37 Baton Rouge

sch.

38 "Am — blame?"

39 Gusto

42 Spike's warning

44 Complaint

48 Bobby of hockey

49 Petri dish gel

50 Jocular Johnson

51 '60s war zone

52 Carte

53 Oaf

54 Curved letter

55 Probability

56 Burns and

Jennings

### DOWN

1 Throat clearer

2 Greek cheese

3 Jacob's brother

4 Type of carpeting

5 Collapse

6 Last writes?

7 Roman god

of fire

8 Summer in Paris

9 Mexican entree

10 Pinnacle

11 Depend (on)

20 Consecutive

22 Audition goals

24 Humding

25 LXVII tripled

26 Hosp. areas

27 Train unit

29 Up to

30 Packed away

31 Squealer

33 Schlepper

36 High, wispy

39 Region

40 Eventful periods

41 Branches

43 McNally partner

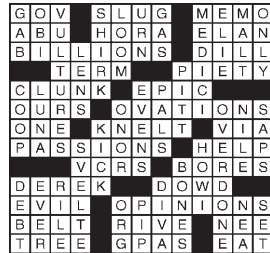
45 Perry's creator

46 Thames town

47 Govt. agents

49 I love (Lat.)

### Answer to Previous Puzzle



### 12-9

### CRYPTOQUIP

UL W DCRBUHP KKYHD XRWGD

SC DNWX CGH TRHWMHP LCP

WGCSDHP, NOWS NURR OH BC?

DNUSTO WPKJ YGUMHD.

**Yesterday's Cryptquip:** RECORD BY SOME PERFORMERS TALKING IN THE ACCENT OF A CITY IN WASHINGTON: A SPOKANE-WORD ALBUM.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals S

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## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## Big Step: Few go from D-II to D-I

Transfers  
making jump  
find homes  
in Big East

BY ERIC OLSON  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Manny Suarez always believed he was capable of playing Division I basketball, and he did for one season before unforeseen circumstances led him to the Division II ranks for a couple of years.

Once he graduated from Adelphi University in New York, he knew he would regret it if he didn't try to return to Division I for his final year of eligibility.

Creighton, it turned out, was looking for someone just like him — a big man with a nice shot who could help cushion the blow of losing underclassman Justin Patton to the NBA.

At fellow Big East program DePaul, the Blue Demons might be getting more than they bargained for when their Division II transfer from Lewis University near Chicago, Guard Max Strus is averaging a team-best 15.6 points and shooting 92 percent on free throws while playing 34 minutes a game.

"The fact they are jumping to power conference programs and a guy like Max Strus is the go-to guy for DePaul, that is a giant leap and it kind of speaks volumes about that kid as a ballplayer in general. It has to be a special, unique case for it to happen," Rivals national recruiting analyst Corey Evans said.

According to the NCAA, only 11 of the 768 players who transferred this year moved from Division II to Division I, 189 went from D1 to D2. A player going from D2 to D1 must sit out one season before becoming eligible unless he's a graduate transfer; a D1 transfer is immediately eligible in D2.

One of the biggest D2-to-D1 success stories is Derrick White. He transferred from Colorado-Colorado Springs to Colorado where he was the Buffaloes' leading scorer last season and was a first-round draft pick by the San Antonio Spurs.

Creighton's Suarez began his career at Fordham of the mid-major Atlantic 10. The 6-foot-10, 250-pounder from Cliffside Park, N.J., redshirted his first season, got limited minutes his second and saw no future for himself after the Rams made a coaching change. Adelphi was a natural landing spot for Suarez because the coach, Dave Duke, previously was an assistant at Fordham and had recruited Suarez.

Suarez averaged 15 points and 8.6 rebounds in two seasons for Adelphi, but he wasn't satisfied.

"People doubted I could play in Division I," he said. "After my old coach got fired, I went down to Division II, so some people felt



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Creighton's Manny Suarez, right, defends UCLA's Aaron Holiday during a game last month in Kansas City, Mo. With one year of eligibility left, the 6-foot-10, 250-pound Suarez transferred from Division II Adelphi to Division I Creighton, and he's playing a significant role off the bench. He's among the roughly 10 transfers who made the move from D2 to D1 this season.

**'If I was playing that well at that level, I knew I could make the jump to this one and be competitive still.'**

Max Strus  
DePaul guard

as if they were proven right even though they didn't understand the full story. Making this transition, a lot of people think I cannot compete at this level. I might be a fluke. I don't know yet. But I'm going to play hard and I'm going to give it my all because it's all I can do."

Creighton coach Greg McDermott said he didn't remember how Suarez's name came across his desk, but he watched video and liked what he saw: big body, scrappy under the basket, ability to shoot the three-pointer. Suarez played a season-high 18 minutes off the bench in a win over UCLA and is averaging 11 minutes, 4.6 points and 2.9 rebounds.

"He's certainly impacted us winning some games already," McDermott said, "and hopefully he continues to improve and helps us in the future."

DePaul's Strus already has established himself as a rising star in the Big East. Coming out of high school he was undersized and had one Division I offer, from Chicago State. His brother had played at Lewis, near the Strus' home in Hickory Hills, Ill., and he figured he would be happy there. He scored 1,000 points in two seasons, earned All-America honors and began looking for a new challenge in the spring of 2016. He told Lewis coach Scott Trost that he would leave only if he could transfer to a program in the Big East, Big Ten or Atlantic

Coast Conference.

"He thought he needed a little more exposure," Trost said. "I think he may have thought he accomplished whatever he could here. He decided to do what was best for him. No hard feelings. Glad to see he's doing well."

Strus used the year he sat out to acclimate himself to the faster tempo and more physical players in Division I, and now he's filling the minutes played by Billy Garrett Jr. last season.

"In Division II there are guys who can shoot threes and guys who can handle the ball, but there aren't that many that can do it all," Strus said. "Here guys have an overall game. It's a more physical game at this level. We didn't have a weight program at Lewis and didn't have strength coaches. That's a big thing here."

Strus, who has scored in double figures in all seven games, is happy with his move but has no regrets about his experience at Lewis.

"People think Division II is kind of a joke," he said. "It's really good basketball. The guys are still skilled, and there are a bunch of Division I transfers who come down and play right away. If I was playing that well at that level, I knew I could make the jump to this one and be competitive still. I believed in myself and knew I could do it."



NAM Y. HUN/AP

DePaul guard Max Strus goes up for a dunk against Youngstown last Saturday. Strus transferred from Division II Lewis University to Division I DePaul, where he is the team's leading scorer this season.



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at Michigan  
AFN-Sports  
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2 a.m. Sunday JKT



No. 1 Duke  
at Boston College  
AFN-Atlantic  
6 p.m. Saturday CET  
2 a.m. Sunday JKT



No. 6 Wichita State  
at Oklahoma State  
AFN-Atlantic  
10 p.m. Saturday CET  
6 a.m. Sunday JKT

## NHL



KELVIN Kuo/AP

Los Angeles Kings defenseman Jake Muzzin, left, pokes the puck away from Minnesota Wild center Charlie Coyle on Tuesday.

# Wild picking up defensive pace

By Dave Campbell  
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Minnesota Wild general manager Chuck Fletcher sounded like the concerned parent of a needing-to-be-punished teenager recently when he was assessing for reporters his team's performance nearing the one-third mark of the season.

"Incredibly disappointing," Fletcher said. After a franchise-best 49 victories in head coach Bruce Boudreau's first year to post the fifth-best record in the NHL, the Wild were stunned in the first round of the playoffs with a five-game loss to the rival St. Louis Blues. Perhaps the sudden outlier created some sort of hangover effect, because the Wild have been at or near the bottom of the Central Division all season. They started a critical three-game West Coast trip with a 5-2 loss to the Los Angeles Kings on Tuesday night.

"The focus has got to change, and if it doesn't, then this is what we are," Fletcher said last week, after the Wild had given up 13 goals over two consecutive losses to the Blues and the Winnipeg Jets.

What has happened far too often is a stray from the defensive principles and structure that Boudreau was able to get the Wild to follow a year ago. His teams have been high scoring, including last season, but the commitment to protecting their own zone has come first. The depth on the blue line for the Wild is not what it's been in the past, either.

"That's how we have to win games, two goals or less," defenseman Ryan Suter said.

With a 13-11-3 record after losing to the Kings, the Wild are on pace for 87 points, which would have been seven points below the

2016-17 postseason cut. Goalie Devan Dubnyk posted three consecutive shutouts over three November games, but the Wild went on to allow 30 goals over their next seven contests.

"You want to score. It's a lot more fun playing offense than it is playing defense in any sport," Boudreau said. "But defense wins."

The Wild aren't the only team that has underachieved, of course. For every surprise success in Tampa Bay and Winnipeg, there's an unexpected meltdown in Anaheim, Edmonton and Montreal.

What ought to help the Wild, the Ducks, the Oilers and the Canadiens try to make up for their rough starts is that there are so many teams bunched together in the middle of the standings that the traditional Thanksgiving Day threshold for making the playoffs might not carry its usual clout.

**Zucker's second home:** One of the bright spots for the Wild has been the play of left wing Jason Zucker, who leads the team with 13 goals, a pace that would obliterate his career high of 22 goals set last season.

A year ago, Zucker was widely considered the player most likely to be lost by the Wild in the expansion draft, but he was ultimately deemed too valuable to be left unprotected, and center Erik Haula was selected by the Vegas Golden Knights instead. The other reason for such speculation, of course, was that Las Vegas is where Zucker learned to play the sport. He's the only Nevada-raised player currently in the NHL.

Last week, the Golden Knights visited Minnesota, the first time Zucker faced his hometown's new team, and he said that day the prospect of such an unexpected matchup when the 25-year-old Zucker first entered the league felt "a little weird" to him.

"I definitely never thought this day would

come, but it's definitely exciting knowing that they do and that they're doing well," Zucker said.

## Hang on to your hat

In the 415 games that were played this season through Monday night, a total of 29 hat tricks have recorded, including one by Zucker on Nov. 9 against the Montreal Canadiens. That's tied the third-most in the NHL over the 415-game mark in the last 20 years, behind the 2010-11 (33) and 2005-06 (30) seasons. Last year at that point, there were only 19 hat tricks.

## Fourteen at home for Forsberg

Nashville Predators left wing Filip Forsberg is the only player in the NHL to record at least one point in each home game this season. When Boston pulled within 4-3 early in the third period Monday night, Forsberg answered with a breakaway goal 34 seconds later to help the Predators fend off the Bruins.

"You're up 4-1, you don't want to give up two quick goals," Nashville captain Roman Josi said. "When he got that puck on the breakaway in a dangerous spot, you know he scores."

That was Forsberg's 14th point at home, where Nashville is tied with the Tampa Bay Lightning for the best record in the league at 11-2-1. The defending Western Conference champion Predators have won three straight games and are 8-1-1 in their last 10 games.

## Game of the week

The Winnipeg Jets visit the Tampa Bay Lightning on Saturday night, featuring two of the league's top five highest-scoring teams and a pair of squads that have been near or at the top of their respective conference for much of the season.

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	27	19	6	2	40	101	69
Toronto	29	18	10	1	37	101	85
Montreal	19	13	3	3	29	81	90
Boston	25	12	9	4	28	69	73
Detroit	28	11	12	5	27	79	91
Ottawa	26	9	11	6	24	74	89
Florida	27	10	13	4	24	79	93
Buffalo	28	7	17	4	18	69	96

### Metropolitan Division

New Jersey	27	11	14	2	24	84	81
Columbus	28	17	1	1	35	80	70
Washington	29	17	11	1	35	90	86
N.Y. Islanders	27	16	9	2	34	101	95
Pittsburgh	29	15	11	3	33	86	95
N.Y. Rangers	27	10	10	7	29	81	91
Carolina	26	11	10	5	27	72	80
Philadelphia	28	10	11	7	27	79	85

### Western Conference

#### Central Division

Nashville	28	18	7	3	39	92	80
St. Louis	28	18	8	2	38	92	75
Winnipeg	28	17	7	4	38	95	76
Dallas	28	16	11	1	33	86	81
Minnesota	27	13	11	3	29	80	82
Chicago	28	12	11	5	29	84	79
Colorado	26	12	12	2	26	81	86

#### Pacific Division

Los Angeles	27	18	8	1	39	90	63
Vegas	27	18	8	1	35	94	85
Vancouver	28	14	10	4	32	78	77
San Jose	26	14	10	2	30	66	65
Calgary	28	14	12	2	30	81	90
Anaheim	29	11	11	7	30	78	86
Edmonton	28	11	15	2	24	80	96
Arizona	26	7	18	1	19	73	104

**Notes:** Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

### Tuesday's games

New Jersey 4, Columbus 1	
Tampa Bay 6, N.Y. Islanders 2	
N.Y. Rangers 4, Pittsburgh 3	
Detroit 5, Winnipeg 1	
St. Louis 4, Montreal 3	
Nashville 5, Dallas 2	
Buffalo 4, Colorado 2	
Vegas 4, Anaheim 3, SO	
Los Angeles 5, Minnesota 2	
Vancouver 3, Carolina 1	

### Wednesday's games

Toronto 2, Calgary 1, SO	
Washington 6, Chicago 2	
Philadelphia 4, Pittsburgh 2	
Anaheim 3, Ottawa 0	

### Thursday's games

N.Y. Islanders at Boston	
Colorado at Tampa Bay	
Winnipeg at Florida	
Calgary at Montreal	
Dallas at St. Louis	
Philadelphia at Vancouver	
Ottawa at Los Angeles	
Carolina at San Jose	

### Friday's games

N.Y. Rangers at Washington	
Colorado at New Jersey	
Vegas at Nashville	
Buffalo at Chicago	

### Saturday's games

St. Louis at Detroit	
Edmonton at Montreal	
Colorado at Florida	
Winnipeg at Tampa Bay	
Arizona at Columbus	
San Jose at Los Angeles	
Toronto at Pittsburgh	
Nashville at N.Y. Rangers	
Vegas at Dallas	
Ottawa at San Jose	
Washington at Calgary	
Carolina at Los Angeles	

### Sunday's games

Arizona at Chicago	
St. Louis at Philadelphia	
Edmonton at Toronto	
Minnesota at San Jose	

## Leaders

### Through Wednesday, Dec. 6

Name	Team	GP	G
Alex Ovechkin	Washington	29	21
Wiktoria Hvalby	Tampa Bay	27	19
John Tavares	N.Y. Islanders	27	17
David Pastrnak	Los Angeles	27	16
Anze Kopitar	N.Y. Rangers	29	15
Sean Monahan	Calgary	28	15
Mark Stone	Philadelphia	28	14
Filip Forsberg	Nashville	28	14
David Miller	Los Angeles	27	14
Patrick Lake	Winnipeg	28	14
David Gustafsson	St. Louis	27	14
Mark Scheifele	Winnipeg	28	14
Tyler Seguin	Dallas	28	14
Dustin Brown	Los Angeles	26	14
Brendan Gallagher	Montreal	27	13
Michael Grier	N.Y. Rangers	27	13
Nazem Kadri	Toronto	29	13
Austin Matthews	Carolina	27	13
Jason Zucker	Minnesota	27	13
James van Riemsdyk	Toronto	28	13

Name	Team	GP	+
Connor McDavid	St. Louis	28	22
Jaden Schwartz	St. Louis	28	22
Mark Stone	Philadelphia	28	22
Vladimir Tarasenko	St. Louis	28	15
Drew Doughty	Los Angeles	29	14
Austin Brown	Los Angeles	29	13
Adrian Kempe	Los Angeles	28	13
William Nylander	Toronto	27	14
Yanni Gourde	Tampa Bay	27	12
Brayden McNabb	Vegas	24	12
William Nylander	Toronto	29	12
Sean Couturier	Philadelphia	28	11
Artem Anisimov	San Jose	27	11
Michael Grabner	N.Y. Rangers	27	11
Carl Gunnarsson	St. Louis	23	11

## MLS/NBA

# Frei back at site of best moment

By TIM BOOTH  
Associated Press

TUKWILA, Wash. — Stefan Frei would like to make one thing perfectly clear before the Seattle Sounders set foot again in Toronto.

He would prefer it if someone else on the Sounders roster becomes the MVP of the MLS Cup final this time.

"I would really prefer it if one of our strikers became MVP this year," Seattle's starting goalkeeper said with a chuckle.

**"I would really prefer it if one of our strikers became MVP this year."**

**Stefan Frei**  
Sounders keeper

in MLS history to win consecutive league titles.

A year ago, Frei made one of the most stunning saves in the history of MLS championship matches, changing directions and leaping in desperation to get his left hand on Jozy Altidore's attempted header that seemed destined for the top corner of the

goal in extra time. It was the save Seattle needed to get to penalty kicks, where Frei made another save on Michael Bradley and Roman Torres eventually won the title for the Sounders with his made penalty in the sixth round.

But it's the save on Altidore that everyone remembers and is certain to be shown repeatedly prior to Saturday's rematch.

"I'm going to try and do the same thing as last year and at some point really zone out on you guys and social media and just focus on the game," Frei said.

While last year's game will get a lot of the attention this week, it's the defensive performance in this year's playoff run that deserves the focus. Seattle has yet to allow a goal in four postseason games. The Sounders haven't allowed a goal since a 2-0 loss to Philadelphia on Oct. 1. That's a span of six full games since a shot got past Frei or backup Tyler Miller. Miller started the first leg of the West finals against Houston while Frei was slowed by a leg injury.

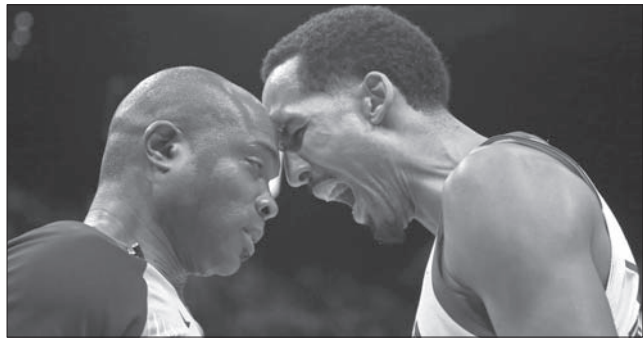
In the postseason, the Sounders have not allowed a goal since the first leg of the 2016 West finals, the longest postseason shutout streak in MLS history.

"It builds confidence throughout the squad when you have someone like Stef in goal," Seattle forward Will Bruin said. "He's going to make a big save when needed."



LINDSEY WASSON, THE SEATTLE TIMES/AP

Sounders goalkeeper Stefan Frei makes a one-handed save on a header by Toronto FC forward Jozy Altidore to keep the game tied at 0-0 during the MLS Cup on Dec. 10, 2016 in Toronto.



JOE SKIPPER/AP

Warriors guard Shaun Livingston argues a call with referee Courtney Kirkland before he was called for a technical foul and ejected during a game against the Heat on Sunday in Miami.

## Livingston-Kirkland incident is a teachable NBA moment

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

Referees have a thankless job. Referees inevitably complain about almost every call they make. Fans scream at them. Players scream at them. Coaches scream at them. They get the overwhelming majority of calls right. The ones they get wrong become big news.

That being said, they're not without flaws.

So that's what made what the NBA did Monday so significant. The league suspended Golden State guard Shaun Livingston for one game because he got involved in an on-court altercation with referee Courtney Kirkland, a justifiable sanction because players cannot be permitted to angrily make contact with referees, ever. But the NBA also suspended Kirkland for a week over his role in what happened in the game against Miami.

"We regret the recent incident between Courtney Kirkland and Shaun Livingston," the National Basketball Referees Association said. "The NBRA has reached out to the National Basketball Players Association to explore ways to improve on-court communications and civility."

It's time to have those talks. The player-referee relationship, while never buddy-buddy, seems very strained right now. Kevin Durant has been ejected from three games already this season, after getting kicked out of one in his first 700 NBA games. Goran Dragic was so angry over a non-call last week that he kicked a basket stanchion. LeBron James recently got the first ejection of his 15-year NBA career.

"At this point, it's like they're trying to turn me into a jump-shooter," James said after his ejection last month, repeating a stance he's offered plenty of times before that he doesn't always get the same sort of calls that others get when they drive to the rim. "I can't be a jump-shooter. I'm not a

jump-shooter."

Referees are taught to defuse situations and not add fuel to the proverbial fire. That's where Kirkland failed. Livingston got in his face to argue that he had been fouled seconds earlier, and replays suggested he had a case. Kirkland then took two steps toward Livingston, hardly in a menacing way, but in a manner that didn't help the situation.

"Both the official and the player were part of it," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

Kerr took the high road, though it was clear that whatever happened shouldn't have happened. Livingston loses a game check and now might find himself wondering if he'll be watched more critically by referees going forward. Kirkland loses a week of work, and when he's eligible to return starting Monday, he's probably going to face even more scrutiny.

**Warriors' start:** Golden State went 19-6 in its first 25 games. That's the Warriors' worst start in the past four seasons.

Of course, "worst" is a relative term.

The Hornets, Nets, Nuggets, Pelicans and Timberwolves have never been 19-6. The Clippers, Hawks, Heat, Kings and Wizards have never gotten off to a better 25-game start.

Not having Stephen Curry for the next two weeks, and possibly more, with a sprained right ankle won't help matters. But only five of Golden State's next seven games are against teams with winning records.

Speaking of Curry, he's already No. 8 on the career three-pointers made list, with exactly 2,000. He may get to No. 3 on the list by the end of this season, and it's not inconceivable to think he could catch Ray Allen for the No. 1 spot by the end of the 2019-20 season.

Curry will be 32 then, Allen hit his 2,973rd and final three-point shot when he was 38.

## NBA scoreboards

### Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	22	4	84.6	—	
Toronto	15	7	68.2	5	
Philadelphia	13	10	56.5	7½	
New York	12	12	50.0	9	
Brooklyn	9	14	39.1	11½	
Southeast Division					
Washington	13	11	54.2	—	
Miami	13	13	45.8	2	
Orlando	11	15	42.3	3	
Charlotte	9	14	39.1	3½	
Atlanta	5	19	20.8	8	
Central Division					
Cleveland	14	10	58.3	3½	
Detroit	13	13	50.0	4	
Indiana	14	11	56.0	4	
Chicago	3	20	13.0	14	

### Western Conference

Southwest Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Houston	18	4	81.8	—	
San Antonio	17	8	68.0	2½	
New Orleans	13	12	52.0	6½	
Memphis	8	16	33.3	11	
Dallas	7	18	28.0	12½	
Northwest Division					
Minnesota	15	11	57.7	—	
Portland	13	11	54.2	1	
Denver	13	11	54.2	1	
Utah	13	12	52.0	1½	
Oklahoma City	11	12	47.8	2½	
Pacific Division					
Golden State	20	6	76.9	—	
L.A. Clippers	18	5	78.1	10½	
L.A. Lakers	18	5	78.1	10½	
Sacramento	7	17	29.2	12	

### Wednesday's games

Cleveland 101, Sacramento 95	
Indiana 98, Chicago 96	
Orlando 110, Atlanta 106, OT	
Boston 97, Dallas 90	
New York 99, Memphis 88	
Golden State 101, Charlotte 87	
Milwaukee 104, Detroit 100	
New Orleans 123, Denver 114	
San Antonio 117, Miami 105	
Minnesota 113, L.A. Clippers 107	
Thursday's games	
L.A. Lakers at Philadelphia	
Washington at Phoenix	
Orlando at Memphis	
Utah at Phoenix	
Orlando at Memphis	
Houston at Utah	

### Friday's games

Chicago at Charlotte	
Cleveland at Indiana	
Denver at Orlando	
Golden State at Detroit	
Dallas at Milwaukee	
Sacramento at New Orleans	
Boston at San Antonio	

### Saturday's games

Washington at L.A. Clippers	
Miami vs. Brooklyn at Mexico City	
L.A. Lakers at Charlotte	
Orlando at Atlanta	
New York at Charlotte	
Philadelphia at Cleveland	
Utah at Milwaukee	
Oklahoma City at Memphis	
San Antonio at Phoenix	
Houston at Portland	

### Sunday's games

Washington at Sacramento	
Toronto at Detroit	
Denver at Indiana	
Utah at Minnesota	
Philadelphia at New Orleans	
Atlanta at New York	



# HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA EUROPE

## Basketball

# 12 days before Christmas

Teams play short slate of games ahead of month-long holiday break

By GREGORY BROOME  
Stars and Stripes

Officially, the DODEA Europe basketball games played in December count as part of the same regular season as those played in January and February. But in many ways, the brief, two-week window between the winter season's start and its annual holiday intermission is an entity all its own.

"The holiday break makes it feel like you are playing two completely different seasons," said Matt McKown, coach of defending Division III boys champion Signella.

Following its usual template, the 2017-18 DODEA Europe basketball season began Dec. 1-2 with a full Friday and Saturday slate. Another packed weekend is scheduled this Friday and Saturday, after which the courts largely go quiet for a month.

All told, there will be no regular-season basketball between Dec. 12 and Jan. 10, though some teams may participate in non-sanctioned tournaments during that time with whichever of their players are available over the holidays.

The real action is reserved for the other side of the holidays, when teams reconvene and launch an uninterrupted seven-week sprint to the Feb. 21-24 European championship tournaments.

"I think there's basically a fresh start come January," AFNORTH boys coach Justin Daugherty said. "That first set of games after coming back from the break will be more important to the tone of the season than any of the games before the break."

December, however, does present an opportunity to instill and install more lasting qualities. Coaches do what they can to make productive use of the odd-ball opening weeks.

"More than wins and losses, the establishment of team roles and understanding what each member can contribute matters most in the long run," Wiesbaden boys coach David Brown said. "The best teams are the ones who know their roles and play for each other."

In fact, the team-building process often benefits from a dose of court adversity in the early going.

Wiesbaden girls coach Jim Campbell said a "slow start prior to the winter break can act as an incentive" for improvement. Vilseck boys coach Kelly Frappier is concerned primarily that "team is improving" throughout the season, "win or lose."

History has proven this logic to be sound. Brown's Warriors lost two of their first three games last season, but didn't lose a regular-season game after Dec. 9 and advanced to the European championship game. McKown's Signella squad absorbed two blowout



Kaiserslautern's Tre Potson dunks the ball against Vilseck on Friday at Vogelweh, Germany. The DODEA Europe teams will play two weekends of games before taking a break from Dec. 12-Jan. 10 for the holidays.

losses against Vicenza last Dec. 2-3 to start a season that ended with a Division III championship.

"It is actually better if we struggle a little bit early on so our flaws are apparent and we know what we need to improve," McKown said.

Along those lines, Naples girls coach Tim Smith appreciates the fact that his Wildcats see some of their "strongest opponents" in December, including Lakenheath and defending champion Stuttgart. While these tough early matchups offer a chance for Smith to evaluate his team, he won't do so based strictly on the final scores.

"It gives us an idea of where we stand," Smith said. "We want to win, but it's not a tragedy if we lose. We want the competition and think this will help us later in the year."

Early struggles aren't always a prerequisite for success. Last year's Stuttgart girls went undefeated before and after the break and cruised to a series of tournament blowouts and the Division I title. But Panthers coach Robin Hess remains wary of the long-term effects December can have on a team.

Losses in the opening weeks of a season can "really knock the

wind out of a team's sails," Hess said. But teams that find success early can fall victim to complacency, which can turn dangerous as their rivals set to work addressing the shortcomings that were revealed through losses.

"Sometimes winning teams don't realize that their opponents will improve throughout the year and games will get harder," Hess said. "They sometimes also don't realize that just because they won, they still have much to improve on."

Andrew O'Connor, coach of the defending Division I champion Ramstein boys, simply wants his team to have an epiphany that he said "has to happen for a successful season."

"At some [time] during the season your team has a moment where everything comes together," O'Connor said. "The team plays with passion and energy, and they combine that with execution."

It doesn't matter to O'Connor when that defining moment arrives, as long as it eventually does.

"Once that moment happens the players become completely invested in the season," he said.

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PHOTOS BY MICHAEL B. KELLER/Stars and Stripes

Vilseck's Tynnesia Wilson shoots over Kaiserslautern's Alicia Alamos at Vogelweh, Germany, on Friday. Vilseck won the game 30-24.

## Weekend peek

# Champs face early test

By GREGORY BROOME  
Stars and Stripes

The Stuttgart Panthers powered through an undefeated girls basketball season last year, culminating in a DODEA Europe Division I championship. Their road to repeating that feat has already proven challenging, and will continue to be this weekend.

Stuttgart, which won all of its regular-season and postseason games by double-digit margins last winter, survived reigning Division II champion Black Forest Academy 31-30 in its Dec. 1 season opener. Now the Panthers encounter another foe capable of ending their multiple-season winning streak.

The defending large-school champs face the Naples Wildcats this weekend as part of a four-team girls and boys Division I gathering at Vicenza that also includes the Vilseck Falcons and host Cougars. The event is one of two such divisional meets set for this weekend, alongside the Division III set featuring Baumholder, Brussels and Hohenfels at Ansbach.

While those collections of squads will produce several intriguing matchups, it's the Stutt-

gart-Naples girls pairing that is most compelling.

While it remains a top contender in the division, Stuttgart lost three starters from its championship roster and might be vulnerable as it figures out its new rotation.

If that's the case, Naples is uniquely qualified to take advantage. The Wildcats have four starters back from last year's third-place team, and they exhibited their potential in the season's opening weekend with 53-30 and 46-29 routs of fellow 2016-17 tournament semifinalist Lakenheath.

On the boys side, the Division III games at Ansbach will go a long way toward determining the hierarchy among DODEA Europe's small schools. Ansbach, Baumholder and Brussels all made strong tournament runs last year before giving way to champion Signella.

The two divisional gatherings highlight a busy final weekend before DODEA Europe athletics adjourns for the holidays. A full schedule resumes the weekend of Jan. 12.

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## Games of the week

# Wrestling Six teams at Kaiserslautern

Saturday

The opening weekend of the DODEA Europe wrestling season included four meets, and four runaway winning teams in Aviano, Lakenheath, Ramstein and Stuttgart. They won their respective meets by an average of 102 points.

This weekend's schedule could produce more parity as 20 teams pile into three meets. The brackets at Kaiserslautern should be particularly competitive as the Lakenheath Lancers and Ramstein Royals look to follow up on their early successes.

Lakenheath claimed first-place finishes in seven of 12 weight classes in the meet it hosted Saturday, while Ramstein wrestlers won 11 of 14 classes at Spangdahlem.

Both the Lancers and Royals are eyeing an end to Stuttgart's burgeoning Division I dynasty, and this weekend's meet offers a valuable opportunity to further develop rosters capable of mounting such a challenge.

## HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA PACIFIC

## Daegu getting back to winning ways

Warriors 2-1 under new head coach Rivera after 30-game losing streak

By DAVE ORNAUER  
Stars and Stripes

Winning might not be everything, as the cliché goes. But it's definitely something.

In a 38-21 win Nov. 21 over Osan, the Daegu girls basketball team snapped a 30-game losing streak, dating back to the start of the 2015-16 season. The Warriors followed with a 58-53 loss Saturday to Seoul American before edging Taejon Christian 32-29 on Wednesday.

Before this season, the Warriors' last win was the ninth-place game of the 2015 Far East Division II Tournament, 50-30, over E.J. King.

The Warriors' new coach, Victor Rivera, stepped off the plane in Daegu just four days before the Osan win after transferring from Puerto Rico, his home, which had been devastated by Hurricane Maria in September — forcing him to leave.

"The girls were crying in our meeting room after the game. They couldn't believe they won," Rivera recalled. "I was so happy for them. I am so thankful to be blessed with such a wonderful group of young ladies."

It's a Daegu team with many of the same players it had the last two seasons. Only this season, the team's been buttressed by Bethani Newbold and Daija Turner, freshmen who are by no means new to the game.

"Coming out with a victory gave us hope individually and as a team," said Newbold, a transfer from Alabama who scored 18 points against Osan and has averaged 15.7 points in three games. "It feels like a dream to be a part of a bright future with an amazing team."

"I'm very optimistic about Daegu's chances," said Turner, who cut her teeth on basketball in Daegu playing youth ball on a boys team. She also had 18 points against Osan and is averaging 22 points in three games. "I do believe this is the start of something big."



PHOTOS BY MARY SARANTAKES/Special to Stars and Stripes

First-year Daegu coach Victor Rivera goes over details with the girls basketball team in the huddle during a timeout. The Warriors are 2-1 after going winless last season.

Daegu girls basketball had been something big as recently as four years ago, when the Warriors won their third Far East Division II Tournament title in five seasons under three different coaches.

From there, though, things went south rapidly. The team went through three more coaches in as many seasons. It didn't even make it out of the 2015-16 season intact, finishing the season playing a JV schedule.

That season and again in 2016-17, Daegu scored in single digits most games. Freshman Mylisse Spurgeon led the team in scoring with just more than six points per game.

"Knowing that we actually won our first game is beyond me. I can't even explain how the win made me feel because all that hard work finally paid off," said Spurgeon, who transferred to the States late last month.

But the celebration wasn't that long. "We have to stay focused and work on getting better in our game," Turner said.

"Winning feels good, but ... it's about getting better. The more time we put in work and are committed, the sky is the limit."

Though the Warriors began well, "we are still far from where we need to be in terms of executing our plays and getting more rebounds," Rivera said. "We need to work on free throws and reducing our turnovers."

While the Warriors "rely heavily" on Newbold and Turner, "they're young and they have the potential to grow into a complete team" if all the pieces stay in place, Taejon girls coach John Hwang said. "Bethani attacks the basket really well, almost gets into the paint at will, and Daija is a tough finisher."

Rivera coached previously at Zama and Perry in the Pacific.

"Being blessed with a wonderful group of young ladies and being a part of that magical first win was priceless," he said.

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## Weekend peek

## Continuity paying off for Kinnick

By DAVE ORNAUER  
Stars and Stripes

They're 6-0 thus far this season, a sharp departure from the Nile C. Kinnick boys basketball team that a season ago went 17-20 overall.

Eight players have reached double figures in a game this season, with Davion Roberts averaging 14 points per game, Gage Henderson 12.8, Aaron Peterson 11 and Kedrick Stockman 10.8. The Red Devils are the first team to top 100 points in a game, doing so in a 102-40 victory last Tuesday over Christian Academy Japan.

What has sparked the turnaround? "These boys have been together for a long time and their hard work is starting to show," coach Robert Stoval said of a group whose core players matriculated in youth activities ball during their elementary- and middle-school years and are now on the Kinnick varsity.

They've worked with outside adult coaching on the base, including Steve Horton, who took seven of the current Red Devils to Hawaii and won the Pacific Rim Championships as the Yoko Xpress Elite.

"We have a group of adults who've been working with these guys from middle school up and it's starting to show up on our team," said Stoval, in his eighth season at the Red Devils' helm.

Despite the solid start, Stoval said much to work on, including rebounding and patience. "We have a lot of way to go to get better," he said.

Their journey continues this weekend when they make their lone visit to Misawa Air Base for a DODEA Japan weekend series against Robert D. Edgren.

This is the last weekend prior to the start of DODEA Pacific's two-week Christmas vacation.

Other events of significance see Okinawa's, Korea's and Japan's wrestling teams venture off base for competition.

DODEA Korea's four high schools compete on Saturday at the Daejeon Physical Education School. On Okinawa, Kadena visits Urasoe Tech while Kubasaki travels to Haebara. And DODEA Japan's three Kanto Plain schools head to Christian Academy Japan for its annual invitational.

On the hardwood, defending Far East Division II boys champion E.J. King makes its way to Kobe for one of two Western Japan Athletic Association tournaments this season. The Cobras girls travel to Osaka.

In Korea, Daegu's boys and girls hit the road for a weekend swing through Seoul Foreign on Friday and Seoul American on Saturday. Humphreys entertains Yongsan on Friday as does Osan on Saturday.

Kadena plays host to Zion Christian's boys and girls basketball teams. Kadena's girls close out the weekend by hosting Ito-mura, a Japanese school, on Sunday.

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## Game of the week

Girls basketball:  
Daegu (2-1) at  
Seoul American (2-0)

When — 1:30 p.m. Saturday.

Where — South Post, Yongsan Garrison, South Korea.

What — Second meeting in as many weeks between two teams considered contenders for the regular-season championship in the Korean-American Interscholastic Activities Conference Blue Division. It matches the host and defending regular-season and KIAIC Tournament champion Falcons against the resurgent, visiting Warriors, who had gone winless the last two seasons. The teams met seven days earlier, with Seoul American outlasting Daegu 58-53 in newly christened Warrior Gym.

Players to watch — Chiefly responsible for helping the Falcons escape Daegu last week was junior guard Maria Bruch, who is averaging 20 points per game and had 28 points plus 10 rebounds, six assists and nine steals. The Warriors' attack features a pair of freshmen, guard Bethani Newbold (15.7 points per game) and center Daija Turner (22 points a game).



Daegu freshman guard Bethani Newbold has averaged 15.7 points in the Warriors' first three games as Daegu is off to a 2-1 start. The Warriors entered the season not having won a game since 2015.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## THE GREAT EQUALIZER

## Triple-option levels playing field at service academies

By PAT GRAHAM  
Associated Press

**AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo.** Fisher DeBerry wants to clear the air: His triple-option Air Force teams were very much passing oriented.

"About every play," the retired coach said. "The only difference is it happened to be a pitch behind the line of scrimmage."

DeBerry loves that jest, and used it all the time whenever his Falcons followers complained the team didn't throw enough.

The triple option has been part of the DNA for Air Force, Navy and Army for decades because it helps level the playing field. It's hard to defend and doesn't require mammoth offensive linemen. At its core, the system runs well with a quarterback who has plenty of moxie — quick decision making, too — and a fullback with a nose for getting through a tiny crease.

Expect plenty of triple-option play when Army (8-3) faces Navy (6-5) on Saturday with the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy on the line.

"We run," said Army coach Jeff Monken, whose team has won three games this season without completing a pass. "That's what we do. We don't have to pass."

A quick note on the triple option: While the quarterback is obviously the headliner, the fullback actually plays a big role. The fullback dive keeps defenses honest. The third option is always to give the ball to the tailback.

It's a difficult system for an opposing defense to decode in a short amount of time. DeBerry said he heard from plenty of opposing coaches who dedicated time to stopping the option in the preseason, just to squeeze in some early work.

"You definitely have to study it, like you do in a class," Navy senior co-captain slot back Darryll Bonner said. "When I got here, I thought I knew what I was doing out there. No, I did not. There's so much to it. Not only do we have to run it, but we have to do it perfectly. It is a great equalizer."

The service academies are typically among the top rushing schools in the country. This season, Army leads the way at 368.1 yards per game, followed by Navy (347.5). After Arizona in third come Air Force and Georgia Tech (each averages 307.4).

That's worth noting since former Navy coach Paul Johnson brought the scheme to the Yellow Jackets.

"It gives us a chance to compete," Navy coach Ken Niumatualo said.

Before taking over at Army, Monken honed his strategy while coaching at Georgia Southern. His signature win while there came in 2013, his final season before leaving for West Point, and against SEC power Florida at the Swamp. Monken called three passing plays, with the last one nearly intercepted. That was it. Georgia Southern won without completing a pass and he hasn't forgotten. Monken keeps a football from that game as a constant reminder.

Back in DeBerry's day, the high-octane passing game was becoming the rage, especially with the late LaVell Edwards and his



David Zalubowski/AP

**Army quarterback Ahmad Bradshaw breaks through the line of scrimmage against Air Force while running an option play during the first half on Nov. 4. The triple option has been part of the DNA of the service academies for decades because it's hard to defend and doesn't require big offensive linemen.**

BYU teams putting up head-spinning numbers. It was hard not to be enamored with that system. It was also hard to draw huge, pass-blocking offensive linemen to Air Force. That's due to their military requirements in which they must pass a physical fitness test each

semester. In addition, a body-fat measurement must be met for graduation.

"The triple option gives you an advantage in the fact that we could control the clock," said DeBerry, who was inducted into the college football hall of fame in 2011. "Any time we ran twice as many plays against our opponent, we enhanced our chances of winning the game immeasurably."

Earlier this season, the Falcons (5-7) had the ball for nearly 42 minutes in a 45-28 win over Colorado State, whose offense had it for just 18.

"They did whatever they wanted," Rams coach Mike Bobo said. Not the first time that's been uttered by an opponent.

The Black Knights actually abandoned their signature system under Todd Berry from 2000-03 in favor of a more pro-style formation. It backfired as Army went 5-35 under Berry.

So the team returned to the triple option, which has gone by a variety of names over the years. Other variations include the flexbone or the wishbone. Air Force calls its particular scheme the zone running game. These days, the read option remains exceedingly popular.

By any description, DeBerry relied on it heavily at Air Force as he went 169-109-1 over his 23-year career as head coach. He went 35-11 against the Black Knights and Midshipmen.

Those days, he received calls all the time asking him to give clinics on the ins and outs of the option. He still gets a few.

"But not too many want to hear from an 80 year old," DeBerry cracked. "People are throwing the ball because they think it's what the fans want to see. Running the triple option, it's boring. But I never looked at it from that standpoint. I used to ask people, 'Do they give more points in foot-

## By the numbers

# 368.1

Army's average rushing yards per game, tops in the nation. Navy is second at 347.5.

Air Force is tied for fourth with Georgia Tech at 307.4.

# 42

Number of minutes Air Force had possession of the ball in a 45-28 win over Colorado State earlier this season.

# 5-35

Army's record from 2000-03, when it ditched the triple-option in favor of a more pro-style formation.

SOURCE: Associated Press



David Zalubowski/AP

**Air Force quarterback Arion Worthman, front, runs for a short gain as UNLV linebacker Gabe McCoy pursues in the second half on Oct. 14 at Air Force Academy, Colo. At its core, the triple-option is centered on a quarterback with plenty of moxie and a fullback with a nose for getting through a tiny crease.**

ball today when you score from a pass play than when you score from a running play?" No. A 60-yard run is just as good as a 60-yard pass."

AP Sports Writers John Kekis in West Point, New York, and David Ginsburg in Annapolis, Md., contributed to this report.



## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



HANS PENNING/AP

Army coach Jeff Monken, center, and players celebrate a 21-16 win over Duke in West Point, N.Y., last month.

## Pitch: Recruiting is unique challenge for coaches at Army, Navy, Air Force

### FROM BACK PAGE

years at an unfamiliar school then serving a stint in the armed forces, pretty much relinquishing any dreams of playing professionally.

"This is a great place if you can break through the military piece because that's where they get hung up," said Monken, who also was an assistant at Navy under Paul Johnson. "I'm not a military guy. I don't know if the military's for me, and that's always going to be a challenge.

"Ultimately, it's what keeps us from being able to sign a lot of the guys that we go after, and that's the same at Navy as well."

Monken, in his fourth season at Army, thinks the three service academies face the most difficult recruiting challenges in America, in part because they recruit nationally (Army has players from 29 states on its 2017 roster, Navy has players from 32 states and Air Force 21).

Global politics certainly add a dimension not seen at other schools.

"Moms and dads are nervous about their sons coming to the Army and going into ground combat, and understand that and respect that," said West Point Superintendent Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen Jr., who played center for the Black Knights in the 1970s. "I had a son who went to Iraq and it was really hard for my wife. She started crying, so I do understand."

Waugh and a dozen other coaches divide the country into 13 sections and the initial number of prospects can reach as many as 8,000.

Army football is steeped in tradition. It was the AP national champion in 1944 and 1945 and the three Heisman Trophy winners — Doc Blanchard in 1945, Glenn Davis in 1946 and Pete Dawkins in 1958. All played during the academy's heyday under Hall of Fame coach Earl "Red" Blaik, who retired after his 1958 squad finished 8-0-1. The Black Knights remained a winner until the Vietnam War

era, but success has been fleeting since.

Since the turn of this century, Navy and Air Force have dominated Army in the rivalry among the three academies. The Black Knights are 4-30 against their archrivals and before last year's victory over the Midshipmen had lost 14 straight to Navy. The Knights watched as Navy and Air Force regularly played in the postseason.

That the U.S. Army has been involved in military actions in and around the Middle East in each of the past 16 years has an effect on that lackluster performance, according to former Army star Alejandro Villanueva. Now a fixture on the offensive line for the Pittsburgh Steelers, he's one of the few Black Knights to play in the NFL.

"There's a correlation between us being at war and us losing, there really is," said Villanueva, who served three tours of duty in Afghanistan and won a Bronze Star Medal for Valor. "If you're in 2006, would you want to go to Army knowing you're 100 percent going to be put at the front lines? Or would you rather go to the Naval Academy ... [where] the chances of you going to actual combat are very limited and easily avoided?"

"As a recruit, it influences you a lot," Villanueva said. "I think — and I'm sure — if there's a player deciding between going to the academies, it's something that the Naval Academy can sell, the Air Force Academy can sell even more."

One thing has changed since Villanueva graduated in 2010: Monken has guided Army (8-3) to consecutive winning seasons for the first time since Young's last two years (1989-90). After the Black Knights play Navy on Saturday, they will then chase a second straight bowl victory, too.

"We've been pretty successful the past couple of years," Waugh said. "The high school football players out there are starting to realize more and more who we are."

# Led by Niumatalolo, Navy at forefront of academies

Midshipmen coach is 14-5 against school's two biggest rivals

By DAVID GINSBURG  
Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Ken Niumatalolo has made Navy the football king of service academies.

Niumatalolo is the first coach in the history of the Army-Navy rivalry to win his first eight games. He has grounded Air Force in four of the last six years and is 14-5 lifetime against his two biggest rivals.

If those were his only accomplishments, it would be quite enough. Now in his 10th season at Navy, Niumatalolo has beaten Notre Dame three times, guided Navy into the Top 25 in each of the last three seasons and walked the sideline in nine bowl games (winning four).

"His success speaks for itself," senior co-captain Darryl Bonner said. "He tells us he knows how to win, and he's proven it. We just follow his lead."

Niumatalolo didn't invent the triple option. He merely perfected it. The unique offensive weapon, along with his hands-on leadership, make Niumatalolo attractive to schools with much more money and better facilities than Navy. He receives around \$2 million annually, far more than Jeff Monken at Army and Air Force's Troy Calhoun.

"I've always told this to people: If there's an offer, I'll listen," Niumatalolo said. "This is America. You listen for opportunities. If there's an offer that's better for me and my family, well, my family comes first. I've listened to these offers, but I have a great job. You look at these other places, and you realize that coaching at the United States Naval Academy is a great blessing. I coach great kids. I love living in Annapolis. The grass isn't always greener."

His predecessor, Paul Johnson, left for Georgia Tech. Niumatalolo had an interview with Brigham Young in 2015, but ultimately decided to stay put.

"I told him that I didn't think BYU was a better job than Navy," Bonner said. "The United States Naval Academy is one of the most prestigious institutions in the country. We have unparalleled support in the area in which we exist. And you're dealing with the highest quality of human beings on the planet."

At a school designed to breed leaders, Niumatalolo is right up there with the best of them.

"The most important thing coach Niumatalolo has done is teach us to be better men," linebacker and co-captain D.J. Palmore said. "He always emphasizes our life outside of foot-



EVAN VUCCI/AP

In this Dec. 10, 2011 photo, Navy head coach Ken Niumatalolo reacts after a first down during the final moments of 27-21 win over Army in Landover, Md. Preaching love, togetherness and moral integrity, Niumatalolo has enjoyed an unprecedented stretch of success during his 10-year run with the Midshipmen. He is the first coach in the history of the Army-Navy rivalry to win his first eight games, and has grounded Air Force four times in the last six years.

ball and after football. He makes sure we do the right thing, and he's always got our back. I appreciate that, because I don't think I would have gotten that at another school."

Bonner was recruited by North Carolina State, but chose Navy. After playing under Niumatalolo for four years, the slot back knows he made the right decision.

"Football is a rough sport. You're hitting all the time," Bonner said. "But what is really deep-rooted in this team, the foundation, is love. Just being out there with your brothers. You don't get that at other schools."

It's tough to recruit at Navy, mainly because life after football means fulfilling a military commitment. Niumatalolo understands this, and uses it in his pitch to prospective athletes.

"Our biggest selling point is not about the next four years, but the next 40 years," he said. "It's about career opportunities. It's about getting one of the best educations in the world at the premier leadership institution in the world, and also playing big-time

football. That's our sell: Prepare yourself for the future."

Niumatalolo, 52, is 83-47 at Navy. With another victory over Army on Saturday, he would earn his sixth Commander-In-Chief's Trophy, presented annually to the winner of the football competition between the country's three major service academies. No one has ever won more games with the Midshipmen, and it's safe to say Niumatalolo will have the opportunity to add to that total as long as he cares to stick around.

Niumatalolo's assistants, many of whom have been with him since he took over, are paid handsomely as well.

"One of the things that we've been able to do to retain him is be competitive, and provide him with resources that go beyond the other two academies," Gladchuk said. "Part of that is maintaining and sustaining the quality and continuity of the coaching staff all these years."

If Gladchuk has his way, Niumatalolo and Navy will remain the class of the service academies for years to come.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Like him or not, QB Mayfield is one of a kind

## Sooners' Heisman Trophy favorite not changing for critics

By CLIFF BRUNT  
Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Part of Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield embraces being the bad guy.

He told Baylor's players during warmups they "forgot who daddy is" and that he was going to have to spank them. Before playing Texas Tech — the school he left before walking on at Oklahoma — he wore a shirt with 'TRAITOR' across the front, then beat the Red Raiders again. And of course, he planted a crimson OU flag in the middle of the field at Ohio State after a win over the Buckeyes early in the season.

It's obvious opponents pay attention to Mayfield's antics — Iowa State planted a flag on Oklahoma's field after an upset win, and Kansas' captains refused to shake hands with him.

It all comes with the territory for perhaps the most polarizing figure in college football.

"If people love it, or if some people don't love it, he's OK with that," Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley said. "He's very secure with who he is. His goal is not to try to please everybody in the world. His goal is he's going to be true to himself."

Mayfield doesn't mind jousting with fans on social media, either. Yet, for all the shenanigans, he's all business between the lines. He has passed for 4,340 yards with 41 touchdown passes and just five interceptions this season, and he has rushed for 310 yards and five more scores.

He will be the first quarterback to finish in the top four of the Heisman Trophy balloting three times, and he's favored to claim the award Saturday. He has blazed a winding, record-setting trail littered with big wins, emotional outbursts, awards and apologies, and he has done it all his way.

"I've had a lot of people trying to give me advice through all this, but the thing that I've realized is the person I am is the reason I'm here today," Mayfield said. "I've had success because I'm confident and been enthusiastic and passionate about what I'm doing."

Mayfield has crossed the line at times. He was arrested in February and charged with disorderly conduct, public intoxication and resisting arrest. After Kansas wouldn't shake his hand, he later was caught on camera grabbing his crotch and swearing at the Kansas sideline. As punishment, he was stripped of his captaincy for his final home game against West Virginia and did not start.

Still, his teammates love him as is — so much that when he was stripped of his captain status, the remaining captains took his jersey with them to midfield for the coin toss for the West Virginia game. They know that the edge that gets him into trouble and riles opponents has led the Sooners to the College Football Playoff two of the past three years and to three consecutive Big 12 titles.

"Bake's a personality guy, and we love him and we rally behind him," Oklahoma left tackle Orlando Brown said. "What he does — we understand, people make mistakes. We understand that it's wrong. But we rally behind him. We're going to support each other no matter what."

That's because they see what many don't. Beyond the outbursts is a man who has



RON JENKINS/AP

Sooners quarterback Baker Mayfield celebrates with the Golden Hat Trophy following his team's 29-24 win over the Texas Longhorns on Oct. 14 in Dallas. Mayfield is the AP player of the year, becoming the fourth Oklahoma quarterback to win the award since it was established in 1998, and is a Heisman Trophy finalist for the second straight season.

painstakingly transformed himself from undisciplined gunslinger as a walk-on at Texas Tech to perhaps the most efficient quarterback in college football history. He's on track to break the single-season efficiency record he set last season.

"He's going to work hard," Riley said. "He knows what he wants to accomplish. He knows where he wants to go. He doesn't let much stand in his way. He's still a work in progress — we've all admitted it, and all seen it. He's progressing in the right way."

**Heisman-defining moment:** Mayfield passed for 386 yards and three touchdowns in a 31-16 win at Ohio State in September. He out-dueled J.T. Barrett to move to the head of the pack.

**Best game:** He set the Oklahoma school record with 598 yards passing in a 62-52 win at Oklahoma State. He also threw five touchdown passes to win a shootout with Oklahoma State QB Mason Rudolph, another strong contender at the time.

**Worst game:** Only because the Sooners lost, it would have to be the 38-31 loss to Iowa State. Even then, he passed for 306 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 57 yards and another score.

**Pro prospects:** Mayfield's decision-making and ability to work the ball into tight windows are appealing. His ability to improvise without taking unnecessary risks is rare, and he can make the throws. He has worked himself into being a likely first-round pick.

## Baker Mayfield leads trio of Heisman finalists

Oklahoma's Baker Mayfield and reigning Heisman Trophy winner Lamar Jackson of Louisville are Heisman finalists for the second consecutive year and will be joined in New York for the presentation ceremony by Stanford running back Bryce Love.

**Baker Mayfield • Senior**

QB • Oklahoma (12-1)

Next game (Jan. 1):

Rose Bowl vs. Georgia

Along with the Sooners' team

success, the 22-year-old

quarterback leads the nation

in efficiency rating at 203.76

and has thrown for 4,340

yards and is second in the

nation with 41 touchdowns.

**Lamar Jackson • Junior**

QB • Louisville (8-4)

Next game (Dec. 30):

TexSlayer Bowl vs. Miss. St.

Trying to become the second

player to win two Heismans,

joining former Ohio State star

Archie Griffin. Averaging 411

total yards — up from 393 last

season — and accounted for

42 touchdowns.

**Bryce Love • Junior**

RB • Stanford (9-4)

Next game (Dec. 28):

Alamo Bowl vs. TCU

Second in nation in rushing at

164.42 yards per game and

is averaging 8.32 yards per

carry. An ankle injury slowed

him late in the season, but still

led the nation in rushes of at

least 50 yards with 12. He

also scored 17 touchdowns.



Mayfield

AP

Jackson

Love

NFL

# League to consider reviews for targeting

BY BARRY WILNER  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL will look into adding targeting as a specific category for video review.

Troy Vincent, the league's football operations chief, says it is on the agenda to discuss with the competition committee and the players' union after the season.

In responding to questions about helmet-to-helmet hits and players launching to make tackles, Vincent said Wednesday that the NFL has seen targeting reviews "work to a degree" in the college game.

"I think it is something that we have to consider," Vincent said. "We've seen that it has worked to a certain degree, it's clean. ... We think there have been some positives and we have talked to some of the conferences and the officials there, as well as with some student-athletes. It is a deterrent and something that we will consider; it is one of our agenda items to discuss during the offseason as we speak to the coaches and the competition committee."

"It needs to be discussed because there are a lot of other ramifications that come along with that. It is on our agenda to be discussed beginning in February."

Bengals defensive end Carlos Dunlap wants no part of the college's targeting ejection system.

"I don't want to do all that. I think they go overboard in college with the ejections," he said. "You know some of them are foot-



ADRIAN KRAUS/AP

**Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski looks on from the sideline after an argument with Bills players on Sunday. Gronkowski was suspended one game for a late hit that left Buffalo's Tre'Davious White in the concussion protocol.**

ball plays. If a kid gets ejected for that, I don't think that's right. But they don't have fines in college, so I don't know how you handle that one."

Vincent also noted that coaches, general managers, owners and players are adamant about not wanting players ejected from

games unless there is no other option.

"We don't want to be in the business of ejecting players," Vincent said. "There are only 17 weeks and the philosophy is, if it gets out of control, we ask the referees to maintain control of the game, give them that flexibility. They have that flexibility, but we really emphasize let the players play, but if things begin to get out of control, you must maintain control of the game during that window."

There have been nine suspensions in 2017 for on-field acts. Ejections are much rarer, of course.

"We have had clear directives from the competition committee," Vincent said. "They asked us and the players to remove some of the helmet-to-helmet hits that we have seen, as well as some of the blindside blocks and other types of disparaging techniques and behaviors on the field."

"We have clear directive that this is not something that should be progressive, but that we strongly consider removing a player that is using these techniques that we want out of our game immediately."

The league also will consider adding a category for non-football acts that break the rules, such as Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski's hit on Bills cornerback Tre'Davious White.

Gronkowski drew a one-game suspension under unnecessary roughness guidelines. White is in the league's concussion protocol.

"We've seen a few of these on occasion.

It's something that Jon (Runyan, who handles some NFL disciplinary cases) has raised to myself, and he's actually raised to the appeals officers," Vincent said.

"He'll bring that up in February when we begin meeting with our competition committee, our coaches' subcommittee and our GMs. We will also bring this up with the NFL Players Association, but it is something that we do need to review."

Asked about potential mixed messages the NFL could be sending when it suspends Steelers receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster and Bengals safety George Iloka one game apiece for egregious hits in Monday night's game, then changes Iloka's discipline to only a fine on appeal, Vincent insisted the appeals reviews have been "very consistent, fair and firm." He emphasized that appeals officers James Thrash and Derrick Brooks are employees of the league and the union.

"I just think they try to send a message more than anything," Steelers player representative Ramon Foster said. "They screwed it up. You say you're concerned over player safety, but you had a guy who blatantly had a helmet to helmet and didn't get suspended. You had a guy that just did a taunting and you try to justify it by suspending him. That's not player safety."

"Then you have another situation where a guy plows into another guy and you suspend him for one game. Why one game? Why not multiple games? Because the Steelers play the Patriots next week."

## Steelers angry over conflicting discipline rulings

BY WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The NFL insists it isn't sending mixed messages as it tries to cut down on what it considers violent plays that cross the line.

The Pittsburgh Steelers heard one anyway.

The AFC North leaders are confused and frustrated about the league's decision to uphold Steelers rookie wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster's one-game suspension for an illegal hit on Cincinnati linebacker Vontaze Burfitt while granting Bengals cornerback George Iloka's appeal of his one-game ban for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Steelers star Antonio Brown in the final minutes of Pittsburgh's occasionally brutal 23-20 victory Monday night.

"It's very consistent," executive vice president of operations Troy Vincent said during a conference call Wednesday.

Not according to the Steelers. "They screwed it up," guard Ramon Foster said. "You say you're concerned over player safety, but you had a guy who blatantly had a helmet to helmet and didn't get suspended. You had a guy that just did a taunting and you try to justify it by suspending him. That's not player safety."

Smith-Schuster drilled Burfitt while the volatile Cincinnati linebacker was trying to chase after Pittsburgh running back Le'Veon Bell during a late Pittsburgh drive.

Smith-Schuster, the youngest

**'It's absolutely absurd.'**

**Mike Mitchell**  
Steelers safety on the NFL punishment for JuJu Smith-Schuster

player in the league, then stood over Burfitt as the rest of the play developed, drawing unnecessary roughness and taunting penalties in the process.

Minutes later, Iloka launched head-first at Brown as Brown hauled in the game-tying touchdown, drawing an unnecessary roughness penalty.

Both players were hit with suspensions on Tuesday and immediately appealed. Smith-Schuster, a rookie, had his appeal turned down by appeals officer James Thrash, who was jointly appointed by the NFL and the NFL Players Association.

Iloka had his suspension reduced to a hefty fine by appeals officer Derrick Brooks.

Smith-Schuster's suspension came a day after the league suspended New England tight end Rob Gronkowski for one game for his ugly hit to the head of Bills defensive back Tre'Davious White. Gronkowski took aim at White's head well after the whistle, his left arm slamming face-down into White following White's interception.

While Vincent allowed the league doesn't have set disciplinary guidelines for a "non-football

act" such as Gronkowski's and said Smith-Schuster's taunting did not play a role in the decision-making process, the Steelers can't figure out why Smith-Schuster's actions and Gronkowski's actions ended with the same punishment for violations they hardly consider similar.

"What happened (with Smith-Schuster) happened in the context of a football play," Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger said.

"It wasn't away from the ball. It wasn't a hit on a kicker, a defenseless player. It was a guy getting ready to make a tackle, a bigger football player."

"Obviously we don't like the taunting, standing over him, things like that. I don't like to compare players, suspensions and things like that. I don't (but) you look at what Gronk did and what JuJu did and got the same suspension. I don't know if that's necessarily fair but that's above my pay grade."

Foster, one of Pittsburgh's representatives to the NFL Players Association, called the entire process flawed.

"There should be a committee of people (discipline) that discuss it as opposed to one guy," Foster said. "It should be a committee of people that do it."

According to the NFL operations department's web site: "Players subject to discipline receive a letter informing them of what they did, a video of the play in question, why they are being fined and how much it will cost



FRANK VICTOR/AP

**Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown reacts to a call in the second half Monday against the Cincinnati Bengals. Brown sustained a head-first hit by the Bengals' George Iloka, who received a one-game ban for the play that was later reduced to a fine on appeal.**

them. They also receive information on how to appeal the fine. If they choose not to appeal, the fine is withheld from their next game check."

When it comes to appealing fines and suspensions, "cases are assigned randomly, so neither side in the appeals process knows who will hear a case. The officer assigned to the case reviews the play and hears the league's case and the player's defense. The officer's decision is final, and the ruling is binding."

Smith-Schuster, who is barred from the team facility until after the Steelers play Baltimore on

Sunday night, responded by tweeting "#FreeJuJu" on Wednesday afternoon. His teammates prepared to go on without him, even if they're not sure why.

"There needs to be a set guideline on how we do what we do," Pittsburgh safety Mike Mitchell said. "There's no way I see two people get post-play penalties, post-play infractions that don't have anything to do with football and you get the same suspension as a guy that is making a football play in a football game. It's absolutely absurd. Like I said, it's the Steelers vs. The World."



## NFL

# Manning returns as Giants starter

By TOM CANAVAN  
Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Two-time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning is back as the New York Giants' starting quarterback.

A week after being benched by former coach Ben McAdoo, Manning was put back into the starting lineup for Sunday's game against the Dallas Cowboys by interim coach Steve Spagnuolo.

"My gut right now says Eli should be the starter," Spagnuolo said in explaining the move after practice Wednesday.

The 36-year-old Manning was told of the decision on Tuesday. He had walked into Spagnuolo's office on Monday after McAdoo was fired and told the former defensive coordinator that he wanted to start again.

"It's important to play, that's what I love to do," Manning said after practice. "I love to play quarterback and I love to play quarterback for the New York Giants. So that's what I will work on."

Manning had started 210 consecutive games over the past 13-plus seasons until being replaced by Geno Smith against Oakland last week. The streak was the second-longest in NFL history, only surpassed by Brett Favre (297).

The first hint of the change back to Manning came early in practice when he took the first snap with the offense.

Of course, some of the offensive linemen appeared to tease him as he entered the huddle.

"We reintroduced ourselves to him, especially me," said tackle Justin Pugh. "I have been out for a little while (three weeks) and I wanted to let him know who I was, even though we shared the scout team huddle last week. It was good to see 10 in there. He has been my quarterback ever since I have been in the league."

The benching of Manning last week upset the quarterbacks and angered Giants fans. Combined with the team's 2-10 record and other problems, it led co-owners

John Mara and Steve Tisch to fire McAdoo and general manager Jerry Reese on Monday.

"I think you all know how I feel about Eli," Spagnuolo said. "What happened, happened. In the long run, hopefully it's a really good thing. He walked in my office, and as a coach you want every player to walk into your office with the intent and determination he had."

When McAdoo benched Manning, he said the team needed to evaluate Smith and rookie Davis Webb in the final month of the season so it could head into the offseason with a clearer plan about the quarterbacks.

Spagnuolo was not sure whether the evaluation would be done, adding his goal is to win games. He said that Manning gives the Giants the best chance to do that.

Spagnuolo had a long meeting with Smith and understood his disappointment at losing the starting job through no fault of his own. Spagnuolo added he was impressed with Smith's professionalism in handling the situation.

"I am just going to continue to be the same guy, continue to support my guys, my teammates," said Smith. "I am going to continue to be prepared. You never know what will happen."

Smith completed 21 of 34 passes for 212 yards and a touchdown. He also lost two fumbles after being sacked in the 24-17 loss to the Raiders.

"I feel bad for Geno, too," Pugh said. "He didn't ask to be put in this situation. A lot of disrespect and hate were thrown his way. It's just uncalled for. I get that everyone wants to support Eli, but by supporting one man and putting another down is not the way to do it."



Manning



MICHAEL AINSWORTH/AP

Washington Redskins linebacker Ryan Kerrigan pressures Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott, right, on Nov. 30. Prescott bruised his hand in the game and resumed throwing on Wednesday.

## For Prescott, 'playoffs start now'

By SCHUYLER DIXON  
Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — After 12 games a year ago, Dak Prescott had the Dallas Cowboys on a franchise-record winning streak, cruising toward the playoffs.

In the star quarterback's second season, the postseason essentially started with five games to go, thanks to some early season struggles and the three-game skid when star running back Ezekiel Elliott finally started serving his six-game suspension over alleged domestic violence.

Prescott, the reigning NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year, embraces the "playoffs start now" mentality as the Cowboys (6-6) prepare to visit the last-place New York Giants on Sunday a year after they were 11-1 with 11 straight wins on their way to an NFC-best 13-3.

"The whole point of us winning out, it motivates me," Prescott said. "I feel like it should motivate anybody in this locker room. We're not looking at letdowns. We're not looking at anything. It's one thing in our head and it's to win."

The Cowboys beat Washington in what amounted to an elimination game between the NFC East rivals. They had their best

game running with Alfred Morris since the start of Elliott's suspension, and rolled to a 38-14 win despite just 102 yards passing from Prescott, who threw for two scores.

Prescott bruised his right hand against the Redskins and would have missed at least part of a series if not for a timely punt return for a touchdown from rookie Ryan Switzer.

The throwing hand was wrapped during the portion of practice open to the reporters Wednesday, but Prescott said the wrap came off later in the workout. He did acknowledge, though, that he threw for the first time since the Redskins game six days earlier.

"There weren't any restrictions," Prescott said. "It didn't feel like my hand was bothering me or any limitations on throwing the ball or anything."

Dallas' last two games without Elliott are on the road against underperforming teams that started the season with Super Bowl aspirations.

The Giants (2-10) just fired Ben McAdoo and will be led by interim coach Steve Spagnuolo. Oakland has won two straight, but against teams with two wins between them since Week 5 — both by the Giants. Denver has lost

eight in a row.

But even owner and general manager Jerry Jones is preaching a "series by series, quarter by quarter and you know the rest" approach. Chided on his radio show that he sounded as if coach Jason Garrett was influencing him, Jones joked otherwise.

"You know that deep down, deep down, I've got it all set up in my mind how to get there," Jones said. "But that's not what should come out of my mouth."

As a rookie in 2013, center Travis Frederick experienced a 1-3 finish when the Cowboys were knocked out of the playoffs with a loss in the regular-season finale. He's watched two teams wrap up division titles before the final game, and a season that was already lost in the final weeks.

"It's the first time Frederick has faced playoff survival this early, a year after the Cowboys were well on their way to making postseason plans.

"The answer that you want as a player and being on this team is that there is no urgency difference," Frederick said. "In theory, you want everything to be exactly the same whether you're winning or losing. I think people recognize the situation that we're in."

## Ravens' secondary top priority against Pittsburgh

By DAVID GINSBURG  
Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — For the second year in a row, the Baltimore Ravens will be without standout cornerback Jimmy Smith in a late-season game against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

This time, the Ravens are far better prepared to meet the challenge.

With the AFC North title up for grabs last Christmas, an ankle injury to Smith forced Baltimore to start Shareece Wright and Jerrard Powers at cornerback. The result: Ben Roethlisberger threw for 279 yards and three touchdowns in a 31-27 victory.

The Ravens skidded to an 8-8 finish and missed the playoffs. As the team entered

the offseason, coach John Harbaugh said adding depth in the defensive backfield was the No. 1 priority.

General manager Ozzie Newsome listened, and that is why the Ravens (7-5) are prepared to move forward without Smith, who tore his left Achilles tendon last Sunday in a 44-20 win over Detroit.

"Jimmy was playing at pretty much a first-team, All-Pro level so it's going to be tough to replace him," Ravens receiver Mike Wallace said Wednesday. "But if there's anybody equipped for it, I think it's us, with the players that we have and the depth we have."

During the offseason, Newsome drafted cornerback Marton Humphrey with the 16th overall pick and signed free agent

defensive backs Brandon Carr and Tony Jefferson.

All three will play significant roles Sunday in Pittsburgh. Carr and Humphrey will be the starting cornerbacks, Jefferson will line up at strong safety and Eric Weddle — the only returnee from last year's starting backfield — will be the free safety.

Baltimore leads the NFL with 20 interceptions, including three by Smith. Even if he didn't sustain a season-ending injury, the Ravens would have been forced to play the final four games without Smith because on Monday he received a four-game suspension for violating the NFL's policy on performance-enhancing drugs.

"Unfortunately, Jimmy — a good guy and a playmaker — went down," Carr said.

"But we've got a lot of incredible guys back there champing at the bit and waiting to make plays as well."

Humphrey stands at the top of that list. After Smith went down in the second quarter last weekend, the rookie out of Alabama had seven tackles and an interception. In 12 games this season, including one start, Humphrey has 25 tackles, two interceptions and has knocked away eight passes.

Humphrey is going to need all the energy he can muster if matched up against Steelers receiver Antonio Brown, who scored the game-winning TD in that Christmas game.

"He's crazy," Carr said of Brown. "There are times he cuts his routes off and Ben knows exactly where he's going to be. You have to play him from whistle to whistle."



# GAMEDAY

WEEK 14

TELEVISED GAMES



Oakland Raiders (6-6)  
at Kansas City Chiefs (6-6)

AFN-Atlantic  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Chiefs lead 62-53-2.

Last meeting: Raiders beat Chiefs 31-30, Oct. 19.

Notes: Raiders have not swept Chiefs since 2012, last time they won at Arrowhead Stadium. ... Chiefs are 7-2 against Raiders under Andy Reid. ... Oakland has won two straight and three of four. ... Raiders beginning stretch of three road games in final four. ... Kansas City has lost four straight and six of seven.



Minnesota Vikings (10-2)  
at Carolina Panthers (8-4)

AFN-Sports  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Vikings lead 8-5.

Last meeting: Vikings beat Panthers 22-10, Sept. 25, 2016.

Notes: Vikings RT Mike Remmers played last season for Carolina and started in Super Bowl in February 2016. ... RB Latavius Murray has 323 yards rushing and four TDs in last four games. ... Panthers QB Cam Newton has four TD passes and no INTs in last two home games. Completion percentage has dropped to 60.5.

## Marquee matchup

## Philadelphia Eagles (10-2) at Los Angeles Rams (9-3)

AFN-Sports, 10 p.m. Sunday CET, 6 a.m. Monday JKT

SERIES RECORD: Eagles lead 20-19-1.  
LAST MEETING: Eagles beat Rams 34-28, Oct. 5, 2014.

LAST WEEK: Eagles lost to Seahawks 20-10; Rams beat Cardinals 32-16.

EAGLES OFFENSE: OVERALL (3), RUSH (2), PASS (14).

EAGLES DEFENSE: OVERALL (3), RUSH (1), PASS (6).

RAMS OFFENSE: OVERALL (4), RUSH (14), PASS (7).

RAMS DEFENSE: OVERALL (15), RUSH (27), PASS (9).

STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES: Eagles have won four straight in series. ... Eagles playing Rams in Los Angeles area for first time since 1990. ... First showdown between two picks in 2016 draft, Rams QB Jared Goff, Philly QB Carson Wentz. ... Teams feature highest-scoring offenses in NFL, each averaging 30.1 points as both quarterbacks

have developed quickly. ... Philadelphia coming off 24-10 loss at Seattle, which snapped nine-game winning streak. ... Rather than making cross-country trips in consecutive weeks, Eagles spent week in Orange County, practicing at Angels Stadium in Anaheim, home of MLB's Los Angeles Angels and former home of Rams. ... Philadelphia won at Los Angeles Chargers on Oct. 1. ... Eagles TE Zach Ertz was in concussion protocol. ... Los Angeles looking for third straight win and seventh in eight games. ... Rams playing division leader for third time in four weeks. They lost at Minnesota on Nov. 19, followed by home victory against New Orleans. ... Due to poor air quality because of large wildfire in Ventura County, Rams held walk-through Wednesday rather than full practice. ... Rams have no timetable for return of WR Robert Woods, who has missed the last two games with a shoulder injury.

— Associated Press

Philadelphia Eagles  
quarterback  
Carson Wentz  
Tex S. WARREN/AP

### Also on AFN:

Dallas Cowboys (6-6) at New York Giants (1-10), AFN-Sports-2, 7 p.m. Sunday CET, 3 a.m. Monday JKT

Washington Redskins (5-7) at Los Angeles Chargers (6-6), AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. Sunday CET, 6 a.m. Monday JKT

### EXPANDED STANDINGS

#### American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East	North	South	West	AFC	NFC	Div
New England	10	2	0	.833	348	223	4-2-0	6-0-0	7-1-0	3-1-0	3-0-0
Buffalo	6	6	0	.500	227	283	4-2-0	2-4-0	4-4-0	2-2-0	1-2-0
N.Y. Jets	5	7	0	.417	266	288	4-3-0	1-4-0	5-4-0	0-3-0	2-3-0
Miami	5	7	0	.417	229	298	3-3-0	2-4-0	4-4-0	1-3-0	1-2-0
Tennessee	8	4	0	.667	266	282	5-1-0	3-3-0	7-4-0	1-0-0	4-1-0
Jacksonville	8	4	0	.667	299	178	4-2-0	4-2-0	8-2-0	0-2-0	3-1-0
Houston	4	8	0	.333	296	309	3-3-0	1-5-0	3-6-0	1-2-0	1-1-0
Indianapolis	3	9	0	.250	205	330	2-4-0	1-5-0	2-6-0	1-3-0	1-4-0
Pittsburgh	10	2	0	.833	281	213	4-1-0	6-1-0	7-1-0	3-1-0	4-0-0
Baltimore	7	5	0	.583	280	207	4-2-0	3-3-0	5-3-0	2-2-0	2-1-0
Cincinnati	5	7	0	.417	219	238	3-3-0	2-4-0	5-6-0	0-1-0	2-3-0
Cleveland	5	12	0	.000	176	308	0-6-0	0-6-0	0-10-0	0-2-0	0-4-0
Kansas City	6	6	0	.500	303	274	3-2-0	3-4-0	4-4-0	2-2-0	2-1-0
L.A. Chargers	6	6	0	.500	268	212	3-3-0	3-3-0	4-5-0	2-1-0	2-2-0
Oakland	6	6	0	.500	249	278	4-3-0	2-3-0	5-5-0	1-1-0	2-2-0
Denver	3	9	0	.250	206	315	3-3-0	0-6-0	2-7-0	1-2-0	2-3-0

#### National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East	North	South	West	NFC	AFC	Div
Philadelphia	10	2	0	.833	361	215	6-0-0	4-2-0	8-1-0	2-1-0	4-0-0
Dallas	6	6	0	.500	286	284	3-4-0	3-2-0	5-4-0	1-2-0	3-1-0
Washington	5	7	0	.417	272	314	3-3-0	2-4-0	4-6-0	1-1-0	1-4-0
N.Y. Giants	2	10	0	.167	189	291	1-4-0	1-6-0	0-8-0	2-2-0	0-3-0
New Orleans	9	3	0	.750	353	243	5-1-0	4-2-0	7-2-0	2-1-0	3-0-0
Carolina	8	4	0	.667	269	238	3-2-0	4-2-0	4-4-0	4-0-0	2-2-0
Atlanta	7	5	0	.583	274	244	3-3-0	4-2-0	6-2-0	1-3-0	1-1-0
Tampa Bay	4	8	0	.333	243	288	3-2-0	1-6-0	2-6-0	2-2-0	0-3-0
Minnesota	10	2	0	.833	285	204	5-1-0	5-1-0	8-1-0	2-1-0	3-1-0
Detroit	6	6	0	.500	314	308	2-4-0	4-2-0	5-4-0	1-2-0	3-1-0
Green Bay	6	6	0	.500	258	281	4-3-0	2-3-0	5-4-0	1-2-0	2-2-0
Chicago	3	9	0	.250	191	267	2-5-0	1-4-0	1-9-0	2-0-0	0-4-0
L.A. Rams	9	3	0	.750	361	222	4-2-0	5-1-0	6-3-0	3-0-0	3-1-0
Seattle	8	4	0	.667	290	222	4-2-0	4-2-0	6-3-0	2-1-0	4-0-0
Arizona	5	7	0	.417	219	310	3-3-0	2-4-0	3-6-0	2-1-0	2-3-0
San Francisco	2	10	0	.167	202	298	1-5-0	1-5-0	2-9-0	0-1-0	0-5-0

Game capsules  
compiled from AP



Seattle Seahawks (8-4)  
at Jacksonville Jaguars (8-4)

AFN-Sports-2  
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET  
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Seahawks lead 5-2.

Last meeting: Seahawks beat Jaguars 45-17, Sept. 22, 2013.

Notes: Seahawks have won four of last five in series. ... Seattle has won seven of last nine this season. ... Since 2012, Seahawks are 47-0 when leading by four or more points at halftime. ... Jaguars playing second of three straight at home. ... Jags have won five of last six and are trying to reach nine wins for first time since 2007.



Baltimore Ravens (7-5)  
at Pittsburgh Steelers (10-2)

AFN-Sports  
2:20 a.m. Monday CET  
10:20 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Steelers lead 26-21.

Last meeting: Steelers beat Ravens 26-9, Oct. 1.

Notes: Steelers can clinch third AFC North title in four years with victory. ... Ravens riding season-high three-game winning streak and have won four of five. ... Ravens lead NFL with 20 INTs, 29 takeaways and plus-14 turnover differential. ... Pittsburgh is 15-1 in its last 16 December games dating back to 2013.

### REST OF THE SCHEDULE

San Francisco at Houston  
Chicago at Cincinnati  
Green Bay at Cleveland  
Detroit at Tampa Bay  
Indianapolis at Buffalo  
Tennessee at Arizona  
N.Y. Jets at Denver

Monday's game  
New England at Miami

### NEXT WEEK

Thursday, Dec. 14  
Denver at Indianapolis  
Saturday, Dec. 16  
Chicago at Detroit  
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City  
Sunday, Dec. 17  
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants  
Cincinnati at Minnesota  
Arizona at Washington  
N.Y. Jets at New Orleans  
Miami at Buffalo  
Green Bay at Carolina  
Baltimore at Cleveland  
L.A. Rams at Seattle  
New England at Pittsburgh  
Tennessee at San Francisco  
Dallas at Oakland  
Monday, Dec. 18  
Atlanta at Tampa Bay

## SPORTS

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Difficult pitch

Recruiting players to service academies can be a tough sell

BY JOHN KEKIS  
Associated Press

**A**RMED with a football, Army quarterback Ahmad Bradshaw likely won't forget the moment he was offered a chance to play football at West Point.

It was during Bradshaw's junior year in high school on Chicago's South Side when Army assistant coach Tucker Vaughn stopped by.

"My head coach took me out of the classroom and introduced me to coach Vaughn," Bradshaw recalled. "I said, 'Thank you, sir (for the offer).' Then I kind of whispered to my coach, 'What's West Point?' That was the first time I heard of it."

In this day and age, that's the norm.

Army coach Jeff Monken said most of his players had never heard of West Point when he first recruited them.

"We have a few on our team where this is where they always wanted to go, but very few. I would say it's likely the same at (Navy)," he said.

Welcome to the world of recruiting for football at a service academy, where coaches are tasked with asking prospective players for a commitment like no other—ceding the freedom that teenagers relish, playing for four

SEE PITCH ON PAGE 59

### Inside:

■ Navy coach Niumatalolo has ushered in new era of success for Midshipmen, Page 59

**'This is a great place if you can break through the military piece because that's where (recruits) get hung up. ... Ultimately, it's what keeps us from being able to sign a lot of the guys that we go after, and that's the same at Navy as well.'**

**Jeff Monken**

Black Knights head coach, and assistant at Navy under former coach Paul Johnson

Army quarterback Ahmad Bradshaw, right, runs with the football against Air Force in November. Bradshaw had never even heard of West Point before being recruited by Army as a junior in high school. It's an issue familiar to anyone who's ever been tasked with recruiting players to a service academy.

DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Manning back under center for Giants » **NFL, Page 62**

Wild picking up the pace on defense » **NHL, Page 54**

